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GARDEN DESIGN

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page 36

January/February 2011
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For subscription queries:
GARDENDESIGN.COM/CS
386/447-2491

For editorial correspondence:
EDITOR@GARDENDESIGN.COM

Publication Agreement Number: 40612608
Canada return mail: Pitney Bowes, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON
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VP, GROUP PUBLISHER
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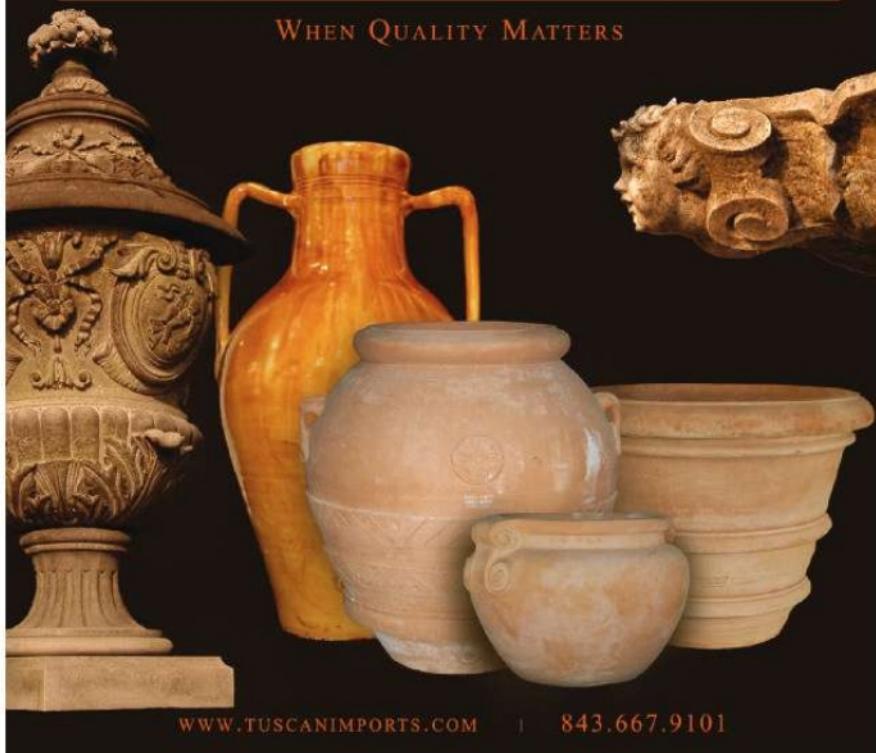
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VIEW

Old Is New Again

A fresh look at the garden, and beyond

Welcome to the new **GARDEN DESIGN**. As any longtime reader will tell you, this magazine, since its inception in 1994, has always offered the smartest, most engaging and informed take on gardening—exploring not just

practical matters of choosing plants and creating thoughtful landscape design, but also the more emotional aspects of coaxing beautiful things from the earth. And in those respects **GARDEN DESIGN** has not changed a bit. But the art of gardening, like any creative endeavor, is something that evolves constantly, and we thought the time was right for a freshening-up. So, we're ringing in 2011 with a new look and new departments.

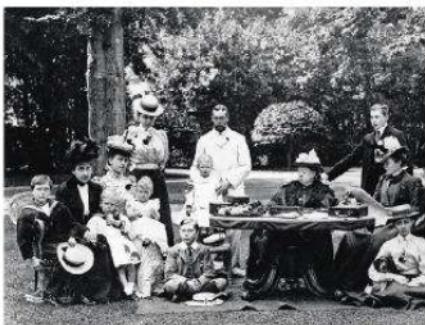
We set out to make a magazine that stimulates all the senses, one that clicks instantly with anyone striving to bring the beauty of the natural world home. We wanted to honor the horticulturist inside us—that person who is obsessed with, say, the technical aspects of propagating—while at the same time speaking to our sense of romance, our wanderlust, our ravenous curiosity. Gardening is our way of understanding the world around us, whether it's our back terrace or a secluded rockery in an imperial garden in Beijing.

We also wanted to give our magazine an artistic and literary voice. In this issue, for starters, we have an essay by the novelist Francine Prose on finding spiritual transcendence in the rituals of planting and weeding (“The Meditative Gardener,” page 26). What’s more, we were determined to nurture the connection between gardening and other aspects of everyday life—that’s why we’ve created **Edible**, a recurring department about growing

your own food and cooking with the garden in mind. In its inaugural edition, contributor Eugenia Bone talks about the pleasures of canning homegrown produce (“Harvest Home,” page 28).

And we wanted every issue to celebrate gardening as an expression of personal style. Lately we’ve been fascinated at how the work of 19th-century botanists, who traveled the world and beautifully documented the flora they discovered, has re-emerged in contemporary design (see “Field Guide,” page 32). Kicking off our feature section is “The New Victorians” (page 36), a portrait of five gardeners around the country who have found ways to revive the spirit of the Victorian era. The Victorians, after all, were the ultimate gardeners, constantly examining man’s role in the natural world, and these five people are doing remarkable things with that era’s signature motifs, from elegant urns planted with agave and begonia to rustic-looking “stumperies” made of decaying logs that host thriving plant life.

All in all, some pretty big changes are afoot for **GARDEN DESIGN**. So, stick with us, watch us evolve. And let us know what you think; we want you to be a part of the process. You are what this magazine is all about. —James Oseland, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR



Queen Victoria and her family in the gardens at Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight, ca. 1896.

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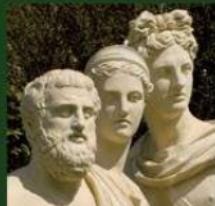


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FRESH

Treasures and traditions
from the world of gardening



Special Delivery

It used to be that if you lived in Alaska and lusted for mini orchids, or if your home was in Georgia but your heart was with rare desert cactus, you were out of luck. Not anymore, thanks to the fact that so many plant clearinghouses and specialist growers have gone online and will ship high-quality specimens nationwide—like the mosses pictured above from Moss Acres (mossacres.com), growers of garden and terrarium mosses, which are mailed dry and ready for hydration. The websites themselves are a pleasure to peruse, with gorgeous photographs and a wealth of information about the plants they provide; many also offer expert advice via e-mail and phone. How do you find the particular online source that sells just the succulent or edible plant you covet? Go to davesgarden.com to trawl the Garden Watch Dog, an online directory of over 7,100 mail-order plant sources. A selection of our favorites is featured on the following pages. —Lindsey Taylor



Mail-Order Jewels

Some of the most beautiful parcel posts you'll ever unwrap come from online plant specialists.

1. Rare Find Nursery

(rarefindnursery.com) focuses on unusual hardy plants, including woody shrubs and trees like the *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Pee Wee,' shown. During fall foliage season, this charming dwarf form of the common oakleaf hydrangea packs loads of visual impact into its three- to four-foot form. As with all mail-order plants, open the box immediately and follow the accompanying care instructions; note the advice to water the plant and give it plenty of light straight away. **2.** If you live in an area with little water but lots of sun, try **Simply Succulents** (simplysucculents.com) for an extensive selection of drought-resistant hardy plants, including an array of *semperfervivum* (hens and chicks), shown.

3. J&L Orchids

(jlorchids.com) sources a wide range of fragrant and miniature orchids, among them the windowsill-loving *Oncidium* 'Yellow Twinkle,' shown left.

4. In late winter to early summer, *Puya venusta* (shown, top left) sends up a 40-inch-long, deep purple bloom. It's available with other California wildflowers and heirloom plants from **Annie's Annuals and Perennials** (anniesannuals.com). **5.** Rock or trough gardeners score dwarf conifers like the variegated *Juniperus squamata* 'Floriant' (left) through **Tiny Treasures** (tinytreasuresnursery.com).

6. And if you're hankering for something utterly new for your garden or containers, **Plant Delights** (plantdelights.com) offers nursery introductions like this *Agave schidigera* 'Shira ito no Ohi,' a slow-growing plant that's great in a pot. —L.T.



2



3



5



6

Lost in Time
Rota, located 40 miles north of Guam, is home to ferns and cycads with 150-million-year-old lineages.
The Museum of Modern Art's new, limited-edition book, *The Island of Rota* (\$3,000), honors these plants with text excerpted from neurologist and amateur botanist Oliver Sacks's same-named book chapter, design by botanically inspired jeweler Ted Muhling, and photographer Abelardo Morell's haunting prints. It's art and artifact, portraying a verdant, and disappearing, land. —L.T.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: MICHAEL JERAS, DAN KYTTAKA PHOTOGRAPHY; PHOTOLIBRARY.RGCE; TIME & LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY IPM; COURTESY CUMBERLAND MUSEUM OF ART AND GARDENS; WWW.THEALCONYGARDENER.COM



CALENDAR JAN/FEB 2011

JANUARY

5 "Wonderful Wood," Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Scotland. Celebrate the International Year of Forests at this exhibit of tree-focused art. Through January 31. Info: rbge.org.uk.

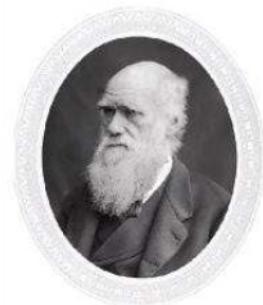


5



12

12 ANNIVERSARY: Reel Lawn Mower 1868, Hartford, Connecticut. Amariah Hills received the first U.S. patent on what he called the Archimedean lawn mower; its spiral-blade reel technology is still used today.



12

25 "A Genius for Place," The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, Jacksonville, Florida. Robin Karson's book *A Genius for Place: American Landscapes of the Country Place Era* is the seed for the exhibit opening today. Through April 24. Info: cummer.org.



25

IPM Essen, Messe Event Hall, Essen, Germany. This four-day flower show is Germany's largest, filling 16 exhibition halls. Info: cha-hort.com /ipm.htm.

FEBRUARY

3 Chinese New Year, Lan Su Chinese Garden, Portland, Oregon. Ring in the Year of the Rabbit, 4709, with garden tours, calligraphy, and tai chi at the two-week fest that kicks off on this day. Info: portlandchinesegarden.org.



3

12 BIRTHDAY: Charles Darwin 1809, Shrewsbury, England. The celebrated naturalist and founder of evolutionary biology was born in his family home, called The Mount.



16

15–16 Plant and Design Show, Royal Horticultural Society, London, England. Urban gardening is the focus of this two-day extravaganza. Info: rhs.org.uk.



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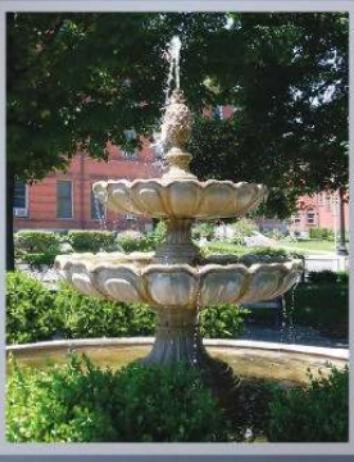
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Fresh

For Thrills

In 1884, La Marcus Thompson unveiled his Gravity Pleasure Switchback Railway, one of the country's first-ever roller coasters, at Coney Island, a seaside resort in Brooklyn, New York. Thus began the era of open-air fun rides, in which Coney Island became home to some of the city's most thrilling landmarks. Among these were the 1927 wooden Cyclone roller coaster and the 262-foot-high Parachute Jump, built in 1939.

Today, though the Parachute Jump has long stood fallow, and the fate of the Cyclone remains uncertain in light of area development, Coney Island nostalgists can relax, thanks to Brooklyn-based Uhuru Design, makers of the new Coney Island line of furniture, crafted from 70-year-old Ipe planks reclaimed after a section of Coney Island's boardwalk was upgraded.

The Cyclone Lounger (\$7,200) mimics "the chaos of its namesake's structure," says Uhuru's Bill Hilgendorf, with a white, gridlike metal base attached at seemingly random points to 69 inches of undulating wood boards. The 20.75-inch-high Drop End Table (\$2,400), a dark steel base supporting a faceted circle of Ipe wedges, is modeled after the Parachute Jump, which once treated parkgoers to a 190-foot drop. Both pieces are unique souvenirs of the historic playground. Since their inspirations are urban structures, the pair are naturals for brownstone decks and rooftop gardens, but they're just as fetching set upon a grassy, landscaped yard. If left outdoors, the disease- and insect-resistant Brazilian hardwood will fade, but it will keep its beautiful form for years to come. —Victoria Ross



COURTESY UHURU DESIGN (2)

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Plant vs. Phone

E-mailing, texting, social networking, Web surfing, video-taking—smartphones are evolutionary wonders of mobile communication. But for all their technological wizardry, when compared with a humble plant, are smartphones really that smart? Take that denizen of the bogs, the pitcher plant, shown below. A prodigy of evolution, the pitcher has adapted to nutrient-poor, swampy conditions with its ability to lure, capture, and digest insects that fall into its trumpet-shaped stalk. And though it's a killer, it charms gardeners with its delicate, colorful form. Which has the real smarts? Maybe we should check back in ten years and see which one is still around. Meanwhile, here's a point-by-point comparison. —Adam Aston



Smartphone

ENERGY USE Power-hungry mobiles require a menagerie of dongles and chargers, plus batteries. Last year they burned through enough electricity to power 240,000 U.S. homes.

HARDINESS The phones can be irreparably damaged by water. Mobile screens are largely unreadable in direct sunlight, and cracked glass screens are commonplace.

PROPAGATION Silicon Valley blueprints are transformed into processors, chips, and screens, which are assembled in East Asia and shipped worldwide. Given technology's pace, the mobile is nearly an annual; and in the U.S., where only 10 percent of them are recycled, landfills swell with plastic, lead, and carcinogenic e-waste.

FUNCTIONALITY Able to do more every day, but quality can be lacking. Photos are fuzzier than a digi-camera's, the MP3 player has a fraction of the iPod's capacity, and books? Try reading Dostoyevsky on a card-size screen. Tiny keyboards remain a frustration.

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS Its greatest lure—more than 180,000 attention-trapping apps—comes at a cost. Phones start at about \$149. Add \$120 a month for voice, text, e-mail, and Web, and costs hit \$3,000 over a two-year contract.

Pitcher Plant

ENERGY USE Pitcher plants digest insects—many of them garden pests—to make their own food. They're also fueled by sun, water, and carbon dioxide, which they convert to useful oxygen.

HARDINESS The plants thrive in direct sunlight and love water. They tolerate a broad range of temperatures, from freezing to sultry.

PROPAGATION In an elegant, sustainable process, pitchers produce a modest flower that, when pollinated, goes to seed. A perennial, the pitcher goes dormant in winter. Some species can thrive a decade or more if well cared for.

FUNCTIONALITY An ingenious leaf structure provides flying visitors with a handy landing strip. Insects, drawn to nectar glands along the leaf's perimeter and underside, hang precariously above a pool of digestive enzymes.

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS Initial cost is less than \$20. No fertilizer is needed since they attract their own nutrients. All in, lifetime cost is under \$50.



Fresh



A Place to Share

My
GARDEN

OPPOSITE: MICHAEL KRAUS (2); CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY SUSAN KEMENYFFY (6); TODD COLEMAN

ON OUR PROPERTY in McKean, Pennsylvania, 15 miles south of Lake Erie—named Raku Place after the type of ceramic art we made—we've created 47 acres of gardens. There's *Allium giganteum* (top left) beside the house; the deck is wrapped in climbing hydrangea (top right), which also covers a koi pond bridge (middle right). Over the years, we've set lamb's ear "dots" upon a "fabric" of ajuga (middle left), clustered stargazer lilies (bottom right) in an uncut bouquet; and planted hundreds of tulip bulbs given to us by a widowed friend, a living memory of her husband. Our gardens are all about sharing. We welcome visitors, and we photograph everything. The pictures are recordings of a journey.—*Susan and Steven Kemenyffy*
Send photos of your garden to my.garden@gardendesign.com or GARDEN DESIGN, 15 East 32nd Street, New York, NY 10016.

My Favorite Tool

Like most garden designers, I don't own a chain saw, but I want to be able to prune branches on my own. My favorite pruning tool, the Felco F600 folding saw, is 14 inches when open and only about 7 inches when closed. You can stash it in your toolbox—it weighs less than a pound—but it's got big, sharklike teeth that make cutting through a four-inch-diameter branch like cutting through butter. My friend the Los Angeles-based garden writer Ivette Soler turned me on to the Felco a dozen years ago; I saw her use it on a garden installation, and that was it. Now I use the same saw to reveal the branch structure of the grapefruit tree in my yard, which gives it more visual interest; to remove sucker growth from my California pepper tree; to cut out old timber bamboo; and during garden installations for clients, to do a little shaping. Unlike loppers, which require so much squeezing to use, the saw is comfortable for someone with smaller paws. I'm five foot three, and it's gratifying to cut a good-size branch without straining. It gives me autonomy. —*Judy Kameon, Elysian Landscapes, Los Angeles*



BOOKS



“This seemingly primitive furniture had symbolic meaning for Buddhist priests and Daoist monks: the organic forms reflected their indifference to worldly goods and their synchrony with the cosmos.”

Paradise Restored

Inside the Forbidden City's garden sanctum

BY PAULA DEITZ

IN VISITING AND WRITING about gardens all over the world, I've discovered that despite vast differences in structural style, all great gardens offer a liberation of thought, at once spurring the intellect and clearing the mind. Nowhere is this more true than in China, where gardens from the imperial era gracefully incorporate all the arts, including architecture, literature, poetry, calligraphy, and music. And never has the story of a Chinese imperial garden been more beautifully and intelligently told than in *The Emperor's Private Paradise: Treasures from the For-*

PAULA DEITZ is the editor of *The Hudson Review* and the author of *Of Gardens* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

More New Books



THE ARTFUL GARDEN (Random House, \$40) shows how the everyday gardener can look to the arts for inspiration. James van Sweden, the lauded landscape architect, illustrates his point with many beautiful gardens designed by his own Washington, D.C.-based firm. He and his coauthor, horticulturist Tom Christopher, offer lucid descriptions of gardens inspired by sculpture, dance, and music. —Alex Erikson



TOMORROW'S GARDEN (Rodale, \$25) is Stephen Orr's insightful look into gardening's future, a burgeoning landscape of sustainable native plants tended by environmentally conscious gardeners. Orr, the gardening editorial director of *Martha Stewart Living*, has also found and photographed some off-the-wall gardens in the here and now: plants growing vertically, a rooftop meadow, and more. —A. E.

courtyards dotted with trees and immense rockeries. The book, which touches on other gardens created under the Qing and earlier dynasties, is also a family portrait of the Qing emperors that highlights their love of hunting and outdoor preserves.

Among my favorite parts of the book are the excerpts, filled with technical specifications, from *The Craft of Gardens*, written in 1631 by Ji Cheng, a painter and garden designer who describes the art of garden making in astonishing detail. Elsewhere in the book, I learned about the exceptional quality of the porous rocks from Lake Tai, in eastern China. I also came to understand how literary references were worked into landscape design: the Qianlong Garden, for example, has a circuitous waterway that evokes those along which poets gathered to write verses and float cups of wine downstream, as described in the master calligrapher Wang Xizhi's *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion*, a collection of poems published in A.D. 353.

Then there are the artifacts: vases, scrolls, and other sumptuous items that demonstrate why the reign of the Qianlong emperor was considered the zenith of the arts in China. Having read *The Emperor's Private Paradise*, I wasn't surprised to hear that a Chinese porcelain vase bearing the Qianlong imperial seal sold at auction in England for a record-setting \$83 million. The book, a treasure in its own right, will set you back considerably less. ☀

FROM TOP: MICHAEL KRAUS/TODD COLEMAN (2)



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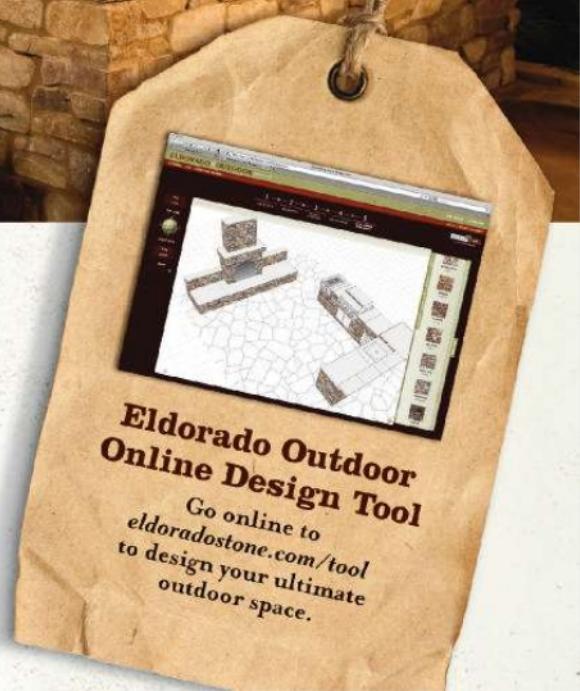


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GROW

Ancient Beauty

Ubiquitous yet often overlooked, indoor and outdoor ferns are botanical marvels

BY LEAH ESKIN

THE FERN IS A MODEST SORT. It creeps below the forest floor, surfacing now and then to unfurl its foliage. It eschews heavy perfume and bright flower, opting instead for basic green. Indeed, I always thought of the fern as ordinary. It wasn't until I crouched down to study the fern's fretwork foliage, its ancient history, and its odd habits that I came to see it as anything but.

The fern maintains its own lingo. While other plants make do with stem, leaf, and shoot, the fern prefers rhizome, frond, and crosier. No unseemly pollination for the dignified fern. It procreates via "alternation of generations," sending its dustlike spore wafting on air; upon landing, the spore grows into a tiny plant called a prothallus, which produces the familiar fern. "It would be as if our eggs and sperm produced little beings, ten inches tall, and they had sex and we didn't," says Warren Hauk, associate professor of biology at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, and past president of the American Fern Society.

The fern has clung to Earth for 350 million years. Today Pteridophyta, the fern phylum, comprises some 12,000 species and thrives in landscapes from the equator to the northern boreal forests. The mosquito fern, a mere speck, grows dense across lakes. The frilly wood fern pads the forest floor. The climbing fern rappels brick walls. The moonwort unfurls a single scalloped leaf each year, dotting sand dunes and mountainsides. In spring, the Himalayan maidenhair fern glistens salmon pink. In autumn, the royal fern glows golden orange.

After disaster strikes—lava flow, say, or forest fire—the fern is often the first to take root. In 2006 the *Washington Post* reported on a colony of maidenhair ferns thriving in a D.C. Metro station, some 150 feet underground. "They're survivors," says Michelle Bundy, curator of the Hardy Fern Foundation in Federal Way, Washington. "They're tough."

As well as tender. In the storybook, the fern hosts fairies. In medicine, it eases aches. In the decorative arts, it's

shorthand for tasteful. That's why the Victorians developed a mass case of "pteridomania," fern fever. The image of the fern was pressed into pottery, stitched onto pillows, and cast into ironwork. The fashionable Victorian sitting room was graced by a Wardian case—an early terrarium—overflowing with ferns. A formal fern conservatory, called a fernery, was thought an appropriate addition to Victorian parks, concert halls, and mental hospitals. "It showed you had good taste because you saw the appeal of foliage plants rather than gaudy, garish flowers," says Sarah Whittingham, author of *The Victorian Fern Craze* (Shire, 2009). (For more on the Victorians' passion for ferns, see "Field Guide," page 32, and "The New Victorians," page 36.)

"The Victorian fern craze never stopped," says Serge Zimberoff, owner of Santa Rosa Tropicals, a nursery in Santa Rosa, California. In high season the company ships 100,000 "clone grown" ferns from laboratory to nursery each week. "Look on TV," Zimberoff says. "Whenever a person is speaking, there's always a big Boston fern nearby."

By the 1960s, the potted fern had moved into the dorm

RECENTLY a colony of ferns was found THRIVING in a D.C. Metro station, 150 feet UNDERGROUND

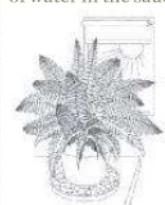
room and living room, where it was tended by a guy with a copper misting can and a girl, likely as not, named Fern. It got suave in the 1970s, when no singles-bar pickup line could be smoothly delivered without a fern overhead.

Today gardeners appreciate the low-maintenance, high-style fern more than ever, and landscapers are keen on the indelately named stumpery, where ferns frolic among logs. Prince Charles keeps a stumpery. "Ferns have a really neat perspective on life," says Tom Goforth, owner of Crow Dog Native Ferns and Gardens in Pickens, South Carolina. "They developed this lifestyle a way long time ago. Ferns, I think, just decided, 'Man, we've got this all worked out. Why change?'"

Indoor Fern Care Tips



Moisture Water ferns only when the top of the soil is slightly dry. To maintain moisture, fill a saucer with pebbles, place the potted fern on the pebbles, and put a small amount of water in the saucer.



Light Ferns generally prefer indirect light; too much direct sunlight will burn their fronds. Adjust your window blinds to create the right light, or move the fern away from the window.



Pests If insects such as whiteflies or aphids appear, wash the fronds gently with water or spray them with a natural indoor-plant insecticide, diluted to half strength.
—Victoria Ross

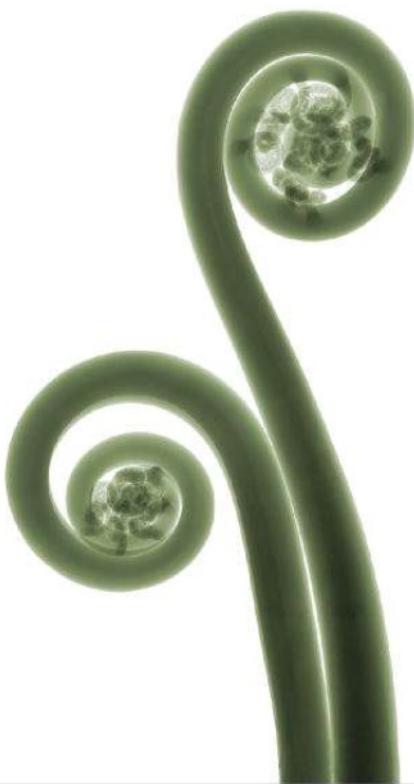


Japanese Tassel Fern
(Polystichum polyblepharum). Zones 4–9. Shade. This lacy evergreen reaches a height of 24 to 32 inches.



BRYAN WHITNEY

Clockwise from top left: Cabbage Palm Fern (*Phlebodium aureum*). Zones 8–10. Sun to full shade. A tropical fern, it has creeping rhizomes that make it an eye-catching choice for a hanging pot. Staghorn Fern (*Platycerium*). Zones 10–11. Sun to partial shade. It's treasured for its long, graphic, graceful fronds. Rabbit's Foot Fern (*Davallia fejeensis*). Zones 10–11. Light to full shade. Named for its furry rhizomes, it looks great in an urn or a hanging basket. Lemon Button Fern (*Nephrolepis cordifolia*). Zones 8–10. Partial shade. This fern's fronds are composed of small, round leaflets. It grows to just about a foot.



Clockwise from top left: **Victoria Lady Fern** (*Athyrium filix-femina 'Victoriae'*). Zones 4–8. Partial to full shade. This deciduous fern was a favorite during the Victorian era. And it's deer resistant. **Japanese Holly Fern** (*Cyrtomium falcatum*). Zones 8–11. Partial to full shade. A tropical fern with glossy, dark, holly-shaped fronds, it makes a fetching, low-maintenance houseplant. **Bird's Nest Fern** (*Asplenium nidus*). Zones 10–11. Light shade. This fern, with glassy, bright fronds, loves humidity. **Australian Tree Fern** (*Cyathea cooperi*) fiddlehead. Zones 8–11. Sun to partial shade. The coiled fiddlehead unfurls as the tree fern matures.

ESSAY

The Meditative Gardener

On finding vegetative bliss amid the snap peas and mustard greens

BY FRANCINE PROSE

OFTEN, WHEN I LEAVE MY DESK TO GO TO WORK in my vegetable garden, I plan to do something else. Not something other than gardening, but something in addition to gardening.

After all, much of the activity required to grow beets and arugula doesn't exactly occupy 100 percent of your concentrated attention. After you've gardened enough—and not even all that much—weeding, harvesting, even planting become more reflexive than cerebral. Without thinking very hard, you can tell a wild dandelion from a tomatillo, perform that little wrist-twist that dislodges a raspberry from its stem without crushing the fruit, space seeds apart so the seedlings won't compete for air and light.

And so, because I've been an obsessive multitasker for as long as I can remember (thank you, Mom and Dad, for letting me do my homework in front of the TV!), I think: Well, fine. While I'm busy in the garden, I'll solve some problem I've been having with my novel-in-progress." I'll consider what to feed the guests coming for dinner Saturday night. I'll use the soothing, repetitive rhythms of gardening to help me focus on something more challenging, more troubling, more complicated than pruning the tomatoes.

But I never do. Hours later, I return to the house tired and content—and not one step closer to having answered the questions I'd hoped to resolve while thinning the turnips.

Over time, I've come to realize that this kind of mindlessness—not deciding, not worrying, not thinking, not creating, planning, or problem solving—is one of the best things about gardening. Letting my left brain hibernate while I operate on gardener's autopilot is what makes gardening so relaxing, so restorative and transporting.

I have friends who go on Zen retreats or wake up at dawn to do yoga. When I ask them what they get from staring at the wall or twisting themselves into pretzels, the altered state of consciousness they describe sounds like what I seek and find among the poblano peppers.

The truth is, I'm too impatient to meditate, too distractible and antsy. And spiritual instruction only makes me more nervous. I often think of the monologuist Spalding Gray's story about being horribly embarrassed at the meditation center when he accidentally ate from the bowl of food meant as an offering to the Buddha. At my first and last "beginning" yoga class, the other beginners, all guys in their 20s, were climbing the wall by the end of the session while I gave up and sat on the floor.

But the garden is endlessly accepting. The zinnias won't snicker if you do the horticultural equivalent of sticking your chopsticks into a bowl headed for the Buddha. The collards greet you like an old friend, no matter who you are. The sunflowers won't whomp you over the head with a stick, like certain Zen masters, if you fidget.

In fact, the garden likes you to fidget. The garden likes constant motion. It demands it, and it tells you what it needs you to do. Weed me, water me, loosen the soil at my roots, protect me from the aphids. In return it gives you happiness, or at least the sort of brain waves that people undergo long sessions of biofeedback to figure out how to produce.

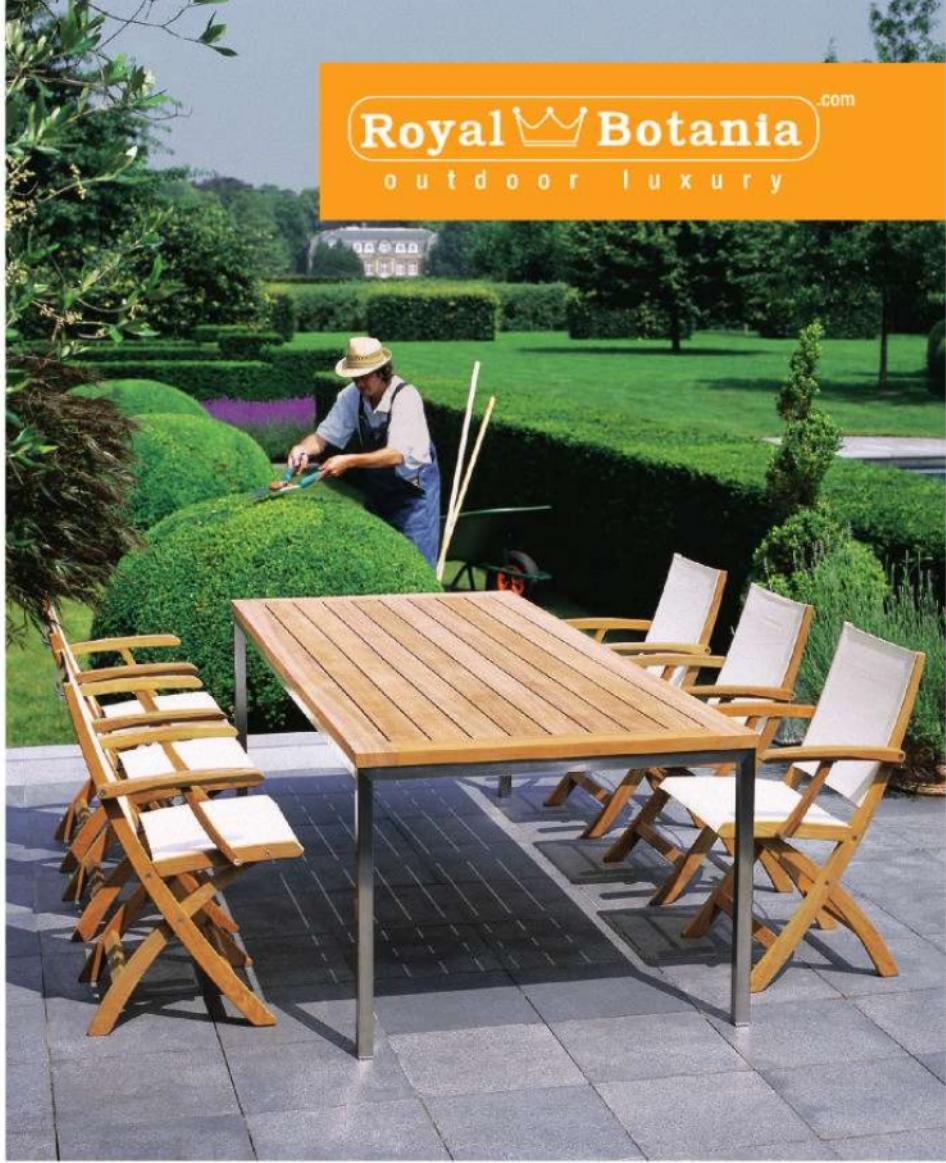
So you could say I am multitasking when I garden, though the tasks are different from the ones I set out to do. I'm not doing hard mental work. Not solving problems or answering questions. But I am simultaneously growing vegetables and attaining a state of vegetative bliss.

Needless to say, people should be able to worship wherever they want. I'll take my transcendence in watching the volunteer cilantro and mustard greens crop up in the spring and fall throughout the garden. Gardening is exercise, it is meditation, and at the end of the day you get to eat the snap peas and the just-dug-up potatoes. ☺





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**In her New York City kitchen, author
Eugenia Bone browns lamb shanks with
a mixture of chickpeas and garden-fresh
tomatoes that she canned at home.**

TODD COLEMAN

EDIBLE

Harvest Home

Preserving brings summer's bounty to the winter table

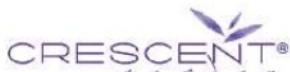
BY EUGENIA BONE

EVERY MAY, MY husband, Kevin, heads out to our cabin in western Colorado to put in our summer garden. It is his time to fix fences and set the irrigation pipes, to plant the basics I rely on in the kitchen—such as tomatoes, zucchini, and fava beans—and to tend the perennials I use to season them, like oregano, thyme, and sage. Come late June, when I leave our home in New York City to join him for the summer, I take on the garden chores. I work in the early mornings, before the sun gets too hot. I walk across the backyard in my rubber boots, hoe in

hand, stepping on the morning glories that blanket the lawn. I follow the shade as it diminishes, hoeing to aerate the soil. I prune the tomatoes and then fill my basket with everything that is ripe, to eat that day or to preserve in small batches for the winter.

My father, an Italian, taught me to prune tomato plants so that the fruit can receive plenty of sunlight. I water them frugally, and the tomatoes grow shiny and fat, retaining their sweet water until I slice them open and shove them into the canning jars. Being Italian, my father also taught





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Edible



Chickpeas alla Marchigiana

MAKES 5 PINTS

Author Eugenia Bone recommends using Bartolini brand Umbrian chickpeas (frantoiobartolini.com) in this hearty recipe. She suggests serving the legumes warmed alongside grilled meats, or as the base for a quick soup with homemade chicken stock. This recipe calls for a pressure canner.

1 lb. dried chickpeas, soaked overnight and drained
1 cup plus 2 tbsp. tomato purée
10 fresh sage leaves
2 1/2 tsp. salt

1. Put chickpeas into a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium low, and simmer for 30 minutes. Drain chickpeas.

2. Clean 5 pint jars and bands. Simmer new lids in hot water to soften the rubberized flange. Distribute the chickpeas evenly between jars. To each, add 4 tablespoons of tomato purée, two sage leaves, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt. Dislodge any air bubbles by sliding a knife into the jar. Wipe the rims, top with the lids, and screw on the bands fingertip tight.

3. Pour 3" of water into your pressure canner. Put the rack component into the canner; add the jars. Lock the lid in place; heat over high heat. Depending on the type of canner, leave the weighted gauge off the vent or open the petcock (your canner's instructions will explain) and allow steam to vent for 7 to 10 minutes, then put on the weighted gauge or close the petcock. Process the jars in the canner at 10 lbs. pressure for 75 minutes at sea level for a weighted gauge or at 11 lbs. pressure for a dial gauge. (For instructions on pressure canning beans at altitude, go to uga.edu/nchfp/how/can_04/beans_peas_shelled.html.) Turn off the heat. After the canner has depressurized, remove the weighted gauge and open the lid away from you (there is hot steam that could scald your face). Allow to cool, then check the seals and store in a cool, dry place for up to a year. Refrigerate after opening.

EUGENIA BONE is the author of three cookbooks. She writes Well-Preserved, a blog about preserving year-round, for the Denver Post.

MICHAEL KRAUS

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STYLE

Field Guide

Contemporary design
with a naturalist's bent

BY STEPHEN TREFFINGER

THE VICTORIAN naturalist—that inveterate collector of specimens, cataloguer of species, and keeper of sketch-filled notebooks—is back. You'll find him or her browsing in carefully curated shops that have sprung up around the country to provide all the necessary accoutrements. One of my favorites is Darr in Brooklyn, New York, a contemporary cabinet of wonders assembled by owners Hicham Benmira and Brian Cousins. Moving through the shop's appealing jumble of antique lab equipment and furniture, taxidermied birds and beasts, and other curiosities provides a palpable sense of what it was like to live in an era when our understanding of the natural world was dramatically expanding, and yet anything and everything you might want to know or possess wasn't immediately available for download.

Spanning the reign of Queen Victoria, which lasted from 1837 to 1901, the Victorian age was for Britain one of economic prosperity, industrial expansion, and scientific discovery. It brought incandescent street lamps, improved sanitation, and handheld cameras, not to mention the novels of Charles Dickens. (On the *(continued on page 34)*

STEPHEN TREFFINGER writes about design, architecture, and technology. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.



The Naturalist's Desk

1. and 2. glass bottles, \$65 and \$75 at Darr (718/797-9733); 3. maple tape dispenser, \$22 at the Conran Shop (conranusa.com); 4. *The Stone Masters* by John Long (T. Adler Books, 2009), \$60 (stone masterpress.com); 5. O-Check stapler, \$8 at the Future Perfect (212/473-2500); 6. Ramie twine, \$15 at Darr (718/797-9733); 7. Absinthe amber scent, \$198 at Flair (212/274-1750); 8. ceramic tray, \$44 at GRDN (718/797-3628); 9. hand-carved bone beads, \$35 at Darr (718/797-9733); 10. Signal floor lamp, \$595 at the Conran Shop; 11. EcoSphere, \$185 at ecosphere.com; 12. oyster shucker, \$80 at Darr; 13. ceramic tray, \$75 at GRDN; 14. selenite column, \$155 at Flair; 15. air plants, \$16 at GRDN; 16. agate coasters, \$60 at the Future Perfect; 17. Whitelines notepad, \$5.90 at Barnes & Noble (bn.com); 18. 1840s hand-painted print, \$100 at Darr; 19. Moooo porcelain sponge vase, \$240 at Matter (matter matters.com); 20. Kings County Distillery Moonshine, \$25 at Donna da Vine (718/643-2250); 21. Hudson Valley Seed Library Dragon's Tongue Bean seeds, \$3 at GRDN; 22. Volant notebooks, \$5.95 at Moleskine (mole skineus.com); 23. Whitelines A4 spiral notebook, \$21 at Barnes & Noble; 24. Kaweco clutch pencil, \$22 at the Future Perfect; 25. pen with level and screwdriver, \$24 at the Conran Shop; 26. handmade scissors, \$28 at Darr; 27. *Serpens* by Guido Mocafico (Steidl, 2007), \$60 at Retrospect (718/522-1767).



(continued from page 32) flip side, there were child labor and Jack the Ripper.) In the parlors and pubs of London and beyond, people debated newfangled ideas about Man, Nature, and the relations between the two. The books *The Journal of Researches* (1839) and *On the Origin of Species* (1859), by Charles Darwin, were wildly popular if somewhat scandalous. The former recounts Darwin's time aboard a ship and on land, charting the shores of South America for nearly five years, collecting samples and formulating the theories that would emerge in the latter book. Foremost among these was the theory of evolution, which remains—in some quarters, anyway—controversial to this day. A renewed fascination with the natural world made its way from laboratories and universities into the lives of everyday citizens, spawning an intense love of botanicals, both as living plants and as decorative motifs. Darwin's private study at Down House in Kent,

Gardening became a pastime not only of the rich but also of the middle and working classes. A set of gentlemen and gentlewomen naturalists emerged, their interest in plants sparking a passion for all things botanical and “scientific”—a predilection that extended to domestic furnishings and decorative accessories.

Botanical elements—fern fronds, flowers, winding vines—found their way onto textiles, china, tableware, and architectural details. The results might appear, to the 21st-century eye, suffocating: too much pattern, too many pieces of furniture, an excess of drapery, little room to move about. Porcelain or majolica serving pieces from the late 19th and early 20th centuries—fern motifs from Wedgwood, say, or a fish and seaweed theme from Shorter & Son—are indeed very busy, if exquisite. Today's aficionado of Victoriana is less likely to muck things up with triple layers of curtains and more couches than there are extended family

BOTANICAL ELEMENTS are now often STYLIZED AND ABSTRACTED rather than busy. They're used as EMBELLISHMENT

where he lived for 40 years, looked pretty much as you'd expect: a large, comfortable room with books and a broad wood table strewn with notes, specimen jars, and plants. In the photos on these pages, we've assembled the modern-day equivalent—the 21st-century naturalist's three-dimensional notebook, full of evocative objects, both functional and decorative.

During the Victorian era, advances in botanical science and tropical species brought back by Britain's colonial adventurers fueled a craze for exotic plants and in particular the fern, a phenomenon known as “pteridomania.” Commercial nurseries soon helped supply a class of amateur collectors and gardeners.

members to sit on them. Botanical elements are now often stylized, abstracted, or singled out; they're used as embellishments rather than applied excessively. Ferns are again a popular element, though they're employed with a more judicious hand, and a fair number of whimsical bug patterns have worked their way into even the most extravagant pieces.

And what of the contemporary naturalist? He or she may collect seeds and plants not necessarily for the advancement of general scientific knowledge but to strategize what to grow to sell to local restaurants or to flavor homemade beer—or simply to imagine which fern to reproduce in the foam on your next latte. ☺

NATURAL LIGHT

In addition to sparking robust conversation about the Descent of Man and the collecting of exotic varieties of plant specimens, the Victorian naturalist phenomenon made its way onto the stuff of sitting rooms in English homes—upholstery, wall coverings, and tableware. Today, pieces in production since that period can be found alongside the work of modern designers, the result of a renewed interest in naturalism as a décor element.

Partially overlapping the Victorian period, the Belle Époque in France and Germany brought its own take on creatures of land and sea. **1.** This hand-painted porcelain sea horse/seaweed plate from Nymphenburg, Germany, was designed by Hermann Grädl in 1899 (“Seepferdchen” plate, \$2,698 at TableArt; tableartonline.com).

In addition to brackens, ferns, and sea plants, insects were also popular as decoration. **2.** The “Lobmeyr” beer (top) and concave (bottom) tumblers recall Austrian and Bohemian glass pieces designed and commissioned by Josef Lobmeyr for his retail outlets in 19th- and 20th-century Vienna (engraved “Lobmeyr” beer tumbler and concave tumbler, \$444/\$426; Ted Muehling; tedmuehling.com; 212/431-3825). The publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was quite the sensation in 1865; **3.** this candlestick inspired by Lewis Carroll's tale, is cast from antique ornaments found by designer Stephen Johnson in his native England (“Wonderland” candlestick, \$89 each; unicahome.com). **4.** Designer Monica Tsang celebrates “the most important yet often misunderstood creatures on our planet” with her butterfly- and beetle-embellished “Entomo” series (“Entomo” teacup and saucer

set; 73.75 euros (about \$115); the New English; thenewenglish.co.uk).

While the original Wardian case (a miniature indoor greenhouse) was designed to protect young plants from London soot, glass bell jars in which specimens were displayed became a fixture of the Victorian parlor. **5.** The custom-made 18-inch-tall bird curio is from a large collection by Little World Design (\$850; littleworlddesign.com), **6.** as is the brass and bronze hand-cast seed pod (\$225).

7. The bird and branch motif of Tiffany's “Audubon” pattern sterling silver flatware, designed in 1965, would have been entirely at home on tables a century earlier (Tiffany & Co. “Audubon” sterling silver flatware, \$145 (dinner fork), \$200 (tablespoon), \$95 (teaspoon); tiffany.com/shopping). **8.** Although work began on the dinnerware “Flora Danica” in 1790, when it was commissioned by the Danish royal family as a gift for Catherine the Great of Russia (alas, she died before the service was completed), its freehand blooms and hand-cut detailing have stayed in production ever since (“Flora Danica” teapot, Royal Copenhagen, \$6,775; Fjorn; fjorn.com; 877/706-0384).

Nature-inspired patterns made their way onto practically every aspect of the Victorian home. Items such as greeting cards, desk accessories, and, of course, fabrics, received the botanical treatment as well. **9, 10, 11, 12.** These contemporary specimens display several popular Victorian themes: ferns, birds, and butterflies (“Elsie de Wolfe” and “Birds of a Feather” from Scalamandre; pricing to the trade; scalamandre.com).

—S.T.



THE NEW VICTORIANS



THE DUAL PASSION FOR THE NOVEL AND THE NATURAL
THAT SHAPED GARDENS IN THE 19TH CENTURY IS
GAINING GROUND AGAIN IN THE 21ST

BY JANE LEAR PHOTOGRAPHS BY PIOTR REDLINSKI

*Ken Selody in his dahlia allée
backed by yew hedges at Atlock
Farm in Somerset, New Jersey.
The dark green structure of the
yew sets off the colorful blooms
beautifully.*





Inside a Victorian Fernery

The Dorrance H. Hamilton Fernery at Philadelphia's Morris Arboretum—the only remaining freestanding Victorian fernery in the U.S.—is a splendid monument to the 19th-century fern craze and the technology that made it possible.

1 Glass and Iron Advances in the use of glass and iron in construction during the Victorian period led to a proliferation of glasshouses like this one, where collectors could house exotic specimens year-round in a controlled environment.

2 Heating During the same period, another new technology—hot water heating, as in the system pictured here—was applied to the cultivation of ferns. In fact, the radiator was originally developed to warm plants, not humans.

3 Ferns The collection at the Dorrance H. Hamilton Fernery includes some 75 varieties, ranging from giant New Zealand tree ferns to delicate maidenhair ferns, arrayed around a series of goldfish ponds and waterfalls.

A tlock Farm in Somerset, New Jersey, is just an hour's drive from Manhattan, but the distance might better be measured in centuries. Here, on the gently sprawling pastureland of an old dairy farm, Ken Selody, a garden designer and old-school nurseryman ("I grow what I sell"), offers unusual annuals, perennials, succulents, tropicals, and topiaries for sale or rent. On this crisp November day, his intimate patchwork of greenhouses and gardens is splendid with the colors of late autumn. § The historical antecedent for Selody's greenhouses is the glass-and-iron Crystal Palace, a giant prefabricated confection of a

conservatory designed by the architect/designer Joseph Paxton and first erected in London for the Great Exhibition of 1851 (the World's Fair of its day). While Selody's airy plastic tunnels are more modest in their outward appearance, the view inside triggers the same amazement and delight in me that the Victorians must have felt at the sight of all those alien plants newly available for up-close inspection. One greenhouse is filled with twirly, swirly tillandsia, bromeliads that hang like ornaments or cascade down wire frames, gathering nutrients from the air; by rights, their provenance should be Whoville rather than Latin America.

"There is no better place to be than a greenhouse in February," says Selody. "You kick the snow off your boots and walk into the tropics. With all the moisture, even the air is buoyant." A coleus I'm mesmerized by was first brought to Britain from the rain forests of Java in the 19th century by professional plant hunters—botanist-adventurers who plundered the remotest reaches of the British Empire to feed a growing

market for tropical plants back home. The influx of unfamiliar species sparked a vogue, mostly among the newly affluent, for bedding out masses of tender, brightly colored exotics. Blessed with a climate unusually mild for such a high latitude, the English could enjoy the showy displays from early spring to the first frost.

Selody's hundred or so coleus varieties include shade-loving 19th-century heirlooms as well as sun-tolerant 21st-century cultivars, with wildly different leaf shapes and clear, deeply saturated pigments. "As a designer, I'm more interested in the effect of foliage than anything else," Selody says. "There is a natural progression gardeners go through that culminates in the unconditional love of plants even when they're not in bloom. A plant's inner beauty is in the foliage."

We come upon some of the topiary that Selody is known for, a perfect expression of his simultaneously rigorous and relaxed style. Each coleus "standard"—that is, a single stem with a ball on top—is a revelation. Unlike a topiary of myrtle, bay, ivy, or box, the

ball in this case is feathery, really more like plumage. "Some plants lend themselves to certain shapes more than others," Selody says. "Experience teaches what works and what doesn't." His approach is similarly broadminded when it comes to container plantings, particularly the urns so beloved by the Victorians. "Almost anything looks good in an urn," he says, offering as an example one in which the soil is covered by ground-hugging echeveria, spiky succulents tinged with purple, out of which rise the bare knobby stems of a vastly larger succulent, a kalanchoe with a canopy of fuzzy gray-green leaves on top. The fact that you can see through the arrangement is important to Selody: "I like its modernity, even in an old-fashioned cast-iron urn."

WHILE SELODY'S individual style is instantly recognizable, his is hardly the only garden where the legacy of the Victorians is in evidence right now. More urns, spilling over with interlacing annuals, punctuate a half-acre surrounded by a plain picket

fence in rural northwestern Connecticut. This is the private garden of Peter Wooster, an interior designer by profession, who divided his time between commercial and residential design projects in Manhattan and the country before forsaking the city entirely. Twenty-three years in the making, this garden has, in the last decade, become a collaboration with gardener Rob Girard, who's assumed an even larger role in its perpetual evolution since Wooster suffered a stroke four years ago.

At the center of the meticulously edged garden is a showstopping Victorian Circle, which gets a fresh injection of colorful annuals every year. This sort of design element satisfied the Victorian desire for geometric layout—a mark of classical refinement in the eyes of an expanding and predominantly urban middle class only just discovering the pleasures of a second home, the leisure time to garden, and an ever broadening idea of what it was possible to grow.

Although visitors often liken Wooster's garden to a museum—there looks to be one of everything in his expansive collection of plants, which extends inside the house to the fancy-leaf begonias and other houseplants displayed all around—nothing seems out of place. Exotics like banana, castor bean, and jungly foliage all thrive in this temperate-zone garden, continents away from where they originated. They're a reminder (*continued on page 42*)

JANE LEAR is a New York-based writer and editor. She is the former senior articles editor of Gourmet magazine.

Geometry Lesson

At the heart of Peter Wooster's garden in Roxbury, Connecticut, lies this spectacular Victorian Circle, a popular element in Victorian gardens, in keeping with a broader tendency toward geometric design. A circle like this one is a great way to showcase exotic plants and play with contrasts of color and texture; Wooster's contemporary version employs a more muted palette than those typically found in Victorian gardens. He uses a mix of tender perennials and annuals, including the three described below.

1 Krantz aloe (*Aloe arborescens*) brings height and structure to the circle. Typically, a Victorian Circle will build upward from the plants at the perimeter to a taller central element like this.

2 Mexican cigar plant (*Cuphea platycentra*) is a long-blooming annual with an upright habit and delicate blossoms. It fills out the circle, and its pink flowers make a nice contrast to the blue-gray aloe at the center.

3 Variegated Cuban Oregano (*Plectranthus amboinicus* 'Variegatus') has white-rimmed, fuzzy foliage and a spreading habit. It functions as an intermediate texture between the cuphea and the aloe.



1

3

(continued from page 39) that hardiness ratings are simply rules of thumb that apply to a wide geographical area. Recognizing microclimates and plotting plants properly have allowed Wooster to "push the zone" as effectively as collectors of tropicals did 150 years ago.

Like Wooster, 27-year-old farmer Annie Novak has a keen understanding of what it means to test the boundaries of nature, though her immediate environs are far less bucolic: an industrial block in the Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, which fronts the East River. You have to climb up three stories to get to the 6,000 square feet that comprise Eagle Street Rooftop Farm, now in its second year. In that short time, the aerie has become integral to community residents whose longing for connection to the land is something any Victorian urbanite would have recognized. Locals shop at Eagle Street's Sunday market and patronize neighborhood restaurants that feature the farm's produce on their menus. Some are members of Novak's team of volunteers. "To tell you the truth," she says proudly, "I'm growing more farmers than vegetables."

A "green-roof" garden is tricky, Novak says, first of all because of the requisite soilless growing medium, which is lightweight and efficient at retaining water but too shallow for many vegetables. "What plants really want is soil that's alive," Novak adds. Unable to raise the range of produce that supported the domestic economy in the Victorian era, when an ordinary kitchen garden might contain 40 different vegetables, Novak oversees a more tightly curated list of crops that includes organic tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, hot peppers, eggplant, lettuces, arugula, kale, chard, radishes, and herbs. This season, the buyers of shares in





Up on the Farm

In the 19th century, large-scale urbanization left in its wake an intense longing for connection to the land that's still with us today. At Eagle Street Rooftop Farm in Brooklyn, New York, they've found a solution: bring the farm into the city.

1 Annie Novak, the 27-year-old farmer in charge of Eagle Street Rooftop Farm, provides her neighbors with fresh produce and the opportunity to pitch in themselves—an update on the market and kitchen gardens of the Victorian era.

2 The farm's location, atop a warehouse building in the heart of the city, is possible thanks to 21st-century green-roof technology. Crops grow in a light, soilless growing medium and are watered with New York City tap water.

3 Selecting the right crops, ones that will thrive in this rooftop environment, is key. Vegetables that require more than six inches of soil are off limits. The operation is fully organic; marigolds (pictured here) are an effective natural pest deterrent.



Exotics Indoors

This begonia-filled room in Peter Wooster's Connecticut home recalls the Victorian rage for houseplants, made possible by advances in heating and window technology and an influx of new plant species from tropical climes.

1 Variegated clown fig (*Ficus aspera*) is a beautiful tree that will thrive as a houseplant, especially if placed in a sunny window. It's prized for its foliage, with white and red variegation on leaves that measure four to six inches across.

2 Striped begonia (*Begonia listada*) is one of the varieties of "fancy leaf" begonia Wooster collects; they're valued for their beautiful leaves more than their blossoms. With all begonias, care should be taken to avoid overwatering.

3 Iron cross begonia (*Begonia masoniana*) is another "fancy leaf," named for the distinctive cross-shaped brown markings on its puckered apple-green leaves. It grows best in indirect sunlight and warm temperatures.

4 Rhizomatous begonia (*Begonia 'Marmaduke'*) has gold-green leaves with burgundy speckles. A rapid grower, it sprouts white flowers in winter. Like all begonias, it makes a good match with ferns and thrives in similar conditions.



Eagle Street's CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) group will provide literal seed money for the forthcoming growing season; in return, they'll receive regular allotments of the freshest produce imaginable.

During my visit, an Eagle Street bee grazes among the calendula, then heads in an unwavering line back to the hive. This farm may be firmly rooted in its immediate neighborhood, but its bees are not. "When you take a frame out of the hive," Novak says, "you can tell where the bees are getting pollen." Examining the honeycomb within the frame, she says, is like looking at a map. "Once I pulled one out and it was all red. The bees had gone over to the maraschino cherry factory in Red Hook, several miles away, and gotten into the dumpster." Steampunk bees.

REDRAWING THE lines between urban and rural was, of course, a major preoccupation of the Victorian age. The map of the Great Western Railway published in *Cassell's Weekly Dispatch Atlas* in 1863 shows lines branching out like so many capillaries from major cities into formerly isolated parts of the countryside. Along with increased leisure time, this railway system allowed urban dwellers aching for the scent of sod and the sight of things growing to make excursions, often to places of great beauty.

Only the most fortunate among them would have been able to build a retreat on the scale of the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden, spread out over three moist, shadowy acres overlooking Puget Sound in Washington State. Here, curator Richie Steffen oversees a collection of 240 or so native and nonnative ferns. "There is something about ferns," he says. "They are so intricate. Their feathery, soft look adds a unique texture to any (continued on page 49)



Work in Progress

Visitors to Atlock Farm in New Jersey find inspiration in scenes like this—a staging area where owner Ken Selody experiments with different plants and ornaments with characteristic eclecticism and a collector's eye for unusual foliage.

1 Curly kale (*Borecole 'Redbor'*) is both ornamental and edible. Its ruffled, deep-purple leaves are gorgeous in a mixed border, and its cold hardiness means it will continue to provide color late in the season.

2 Antique garden ornaments like this recall the heavily ornamented gardens of the Victorians, which often included statuary and containers of cast iron, marble, and stone, in styles borrowed from different eras and traditions.

3 Lion's tail (*Leonotis leonurus*), also known as wild dagga, is a tender perennial shrub well suited to container plantings, with fuzzy orange tubular flowers. Many gardeners use it to attract birds, butterflies, and bees.

4 The Victorian urn is a style of container Selody loves for its adaptability. In the 19th century, cast iron began to be mass-produced, and it showed up in gardens in the form of urns as well as benches, fences, fountains, and more.





A World Under Glass

Terrariums, a Victorian-era invention, are in vogue again. Hazel Davies, manager of living exhibits at the American Museum of Natural History, created this forest in miniature using materials you can buy at any Home Depot.

1 Layers of hydroton (clay pebbles, for drainage), nylon mesh, and orchid bark (to build topography) lie under the soil, a sterilized mix that should not be very nutrient-rich, lest the plants grow too large.

2 Moss, laid in a sheet over the soil, provides an attractive green color and plush texture at ground level. It's also easily manipulated to adhere to the small hillocks and ravines created with mounds of orchid bark.

3 Tropical plants such as maidenhair ferns, ficus, palms, bromeliads, and philodendron are the best choice for a terrarium like this one. The glass container holding them is an ordinary pet store aquarium.

4 The backdrop was painted by Stephen Quinn, who creates backdrops for the terrariums and dioramas at the museum. If you're not using a grow light, eliminate the backdrop to let in plenty of natural light.

(continued from page 45) garden." And, as any pteridologist will tell you, it's just a slippery, gametophyte-covered slope from a crush on ferns, the plant most associated with the Victorians, to an obsession with stumperies.

These artfully arranged tangles of uprooted tree stumps call to mind nothing so much as the gothic fantasies of Tim Burton. Being very dense, stumps take a long time to rot, and in the meantime, their deeply fissured bark provides the perfect habitat for ferns, mosses, lichen, and small woodland creatures. A period conceit, perhaps, but the Victorians knew how effective the enveloping semiwilderness could be in shutting out life's static. The Pacific Northwest, with its forests of western red cedar, Douglas fir, and Western hemlock, is a treasure trove of stumps—logging drove the economy here through the 1970s—and of woodland places in which to site them.

Almost three years ago, Steffen and fellow board members of the Hardy Fern Foundation, based at the Rhododendron Species Foundation & Botanical Garden

in Federal Way, Washington, created a stumpery by upcycling nine dump trucks full of old stumps destined for the wood chipper. Encompassing half an acre, it is one of the largest stumperies now in existence. Catch it at the right time of day—or by moonlight—and it projects a primeval quality that is both striking and vaguely disquieting.

One of the thousand ferns that colonize the same garden is the soft shield fern (*Polystichum setiferum* var. *Bevis*). "It's one of the most graceful and delicate of the old Victorian cultivars," Steffen explains. "And it's available, thanks to tissue culture." Unlike most ferns, Bevis doesn't reproduce by spores, and it doesn't divide readily, either; that's why individual specimens have up to now been costly and difficult to come by. But these days, laboratory micropropagation yields a bumper crop of brand-new little plants. "This can happen with lots of different species," says Steffen. "Totally obscure but really great plants are finally within reach of the gardening public."

What's more, you don't need a

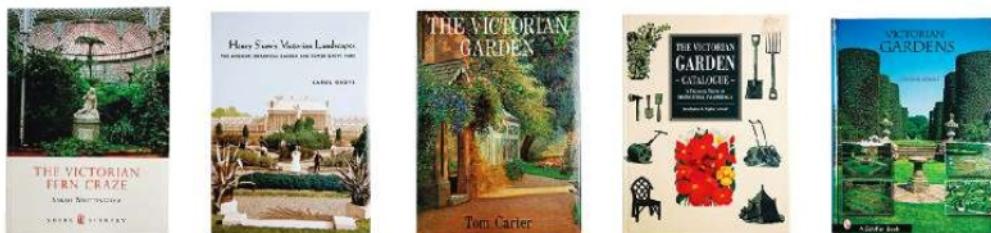
half-wild acre in which to grow them. In fact, all you need is a terrarium. This type of plant-filled microcosm, studied by generations of third-graders, was once called a Wardian case, after its inventor, Nathaniel Ward. A London doctor and ardent amateur naturalist, he deplored the toll pollution took on his garden; in 1829, he accidentally discovered that a common fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) thrived in the humid environment of a sealed glass bottle. He began experimenting in earnest. His Wardian cases, ideal for keeping delicate plants alive on long sea voyages, were instantly adopted by plant hunters; at last they could transport tropical species, including ferns, with a high enough rate of success to make plant hunting profitable and plant collecting viable.

The darling of the DIY crowd, terrariums are everywhere right now, from the crafty website Etsy.com to New York's Museum of Modern Art, where a plant-filled installation created by artist and landscape designer Paula Hayes is on view through February 28, 2011. And just 26 blocks north, at

the American Museum of Natural History, you'll find Hazel Davies, manager of living exhibits, who will soon be reprising a popular frog exhibition in one of the museum's galleries. In the workshop where she assembles living tablœux to satisfy the abiding urge to bring the outdoors inside and the faraway nearer, Davies has created a spectacular terrarium expressly for GARDEN DESIGN.

Housed in a 38-gallon pet store aquarium, the terrarium is an entire ecosystem in miniature. A brief survey of its leafy hillocks and mossy ravines reveals dwarf umbrella trees native to Taiwan, Kentia palms from the Solomon Islands, maidenhair ferns (New Zealand), rubber plants (northeast India, southern Indonesia), and bromeliads (South America). That flash of sapphire? That's a blue poison frog from Surinam. Peering into this lush landscape, you begin to grasp what it was to live in an era when our understanding of the natural world and access to far-flung parts of it were expanding by leaps and bounds. And our sense of wonder at it all is as powerful as ever. ☀

Victorian Gardens in Print



The Victorian Fern Craze by Sarah Whittingham (Shire Publications, 2009) A compelling look at the fern frenzy that took British plant collectors by storm between 1837 and 1914. In chronicling the Victorians' cultivation of, and general obsession with, ferns, Whittingham paints a vivid portrait of the era. **Henry Shaw's Victorian Landscapes: The Missouri Botanical Garden and Tower Grove Park** by Carol Grove (University of Massachusetts Press, 2005) Starting in the 1850s, the St. Louis philanthropist Henry Shaw sought to transform his estate, Tower Grove, into the first American botanical garden, using Victorian models as inspiration. A fascinating portrait of a true American visionary. **The Victorian Garden** by Tom Carter (Salem House, 1985) This authoritative history, replete with delicious details—including descriptions of arcane garden tools like the cucumber straightener—emphasizes the impact Britain's expanding empire had on

domestic gardening during the 19th century. **The Victorian Garden Catalogue: A Treasure Trove of Horticultural Paraphernalia**, introduction by Daphne Ledward (Studio Editions, 1995) Seed and garden catalogues have been around for longer than most people realize. In fact, such publications arguably found their most vibrant expression in the Victorian era, when British suppliers issued catalogues featuring an astounding range of wares, from ornamental archways to exotic plants—all rendered in lavishly detailed illustrations, reproduced beautifully in this book. **Victorian Gardens** by Caroline Holmes (Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2005) A more instructional and process-oriented overview than Tom Carter's similarly titled history, this tome explores the various gardening styles and techniques that Victorian horticulturists strived to master, such as geometrical bedding, statuary, fountains, and topiary. —Victoria Ross

Black Magic

True black plants are nonexistent in nature, but some of these sumptuous gems exhibit shades of the deepest purple. For contrast and sheer beauty, they're intriguing additions to your garden or home

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW BORDWIN





Small Cape Rush
(*Chondropetalum tectorum*). This plant has strappy green leaves with brown sheaths that drop in summer, leaving behind a dark band, followed by brownish-black flowers that emerge from its tips late in the season. Zones 9 and 10. Drought tolerant; full sun.

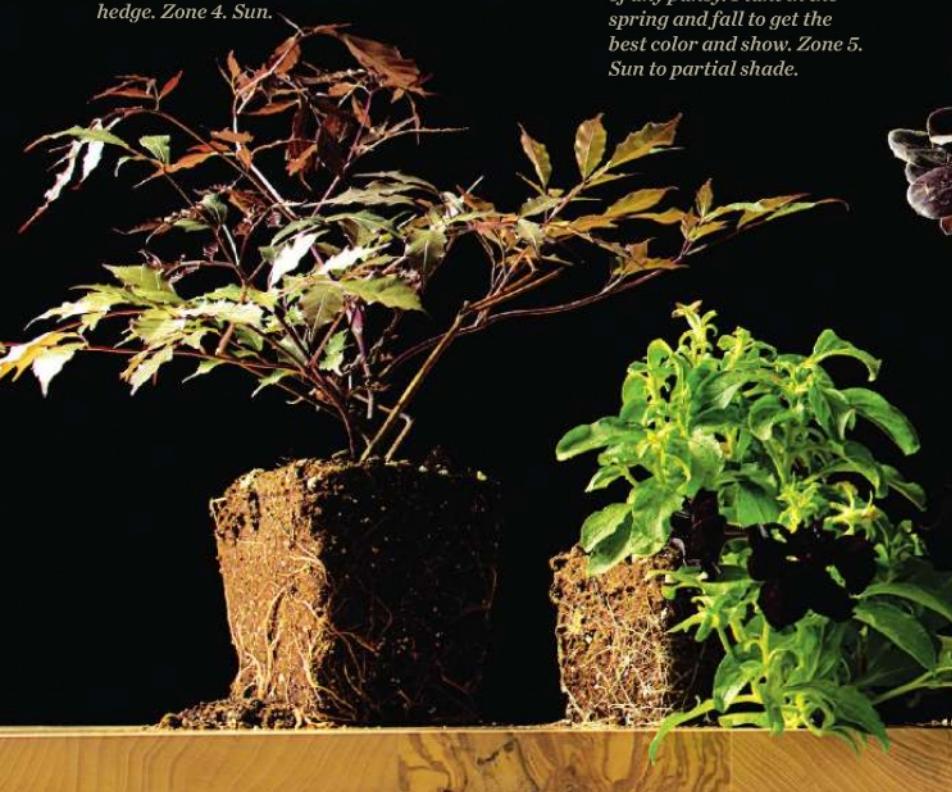
Ornamental Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'Illusion Midnight Lace'). This low-maintenance plant with cascading foliage works well in containers or as an annual ground cover. Zone 9. Sun.

Black Cotton
(*Gossypium herbaceum* 'Nigra'). This ornamental cotton can grow as high as three feet. Its rich black leaves and burgundy hibiscus-like flowers give way to seedpods that, when ripe, open to reveal fluffy white cotton. Zone 4. Full sun.

Hens and Chicks
(*Echeveria* 'Black Prince'). A succulent with short rosette clumps of dark leaves, this plant has salmon-red flowers that appear in late season. It's ideal in containers, in rock gardens, or as the edge of a dry border. Zone 9. Full sun (for best color).

Black Magic

Elderberry (*Sambucus* 'Black Lace'). Cut back this fast-growing shrub in the spring, and it will still grow to eight feet by midsummer. Its pink flowers contrast elegantly with its leaves, and its dark berries can be used to make elderberry wine. Use in a mixed border, or plant en masse as a hedge. Zone 4. Sun.



Pansy (*Viola* 'Black Devil'). A cool-season annual with the deepest black flowers of any pansy. Plant in the spring and fall to get the best color and show. Zone 5. Sun to partial shade.

Black Tree Aeonium (*Aeonium aeonium* var. *artropurpureum* 'Schwarzkopf'). This is a fine option for containers in dry, sunny locations or as a houseplant. Its yellow flowers are a refreshing foil to its dark leaves. Zone 10. Sun.



Black Magic



Elephant Ear (*Colocasia Jet Black Wonder*). This tropical stunner has large, heart-shaped leaves and can grow up to four feet. A great statement in a container; it can also be used as a bold-leaved plant in the garden or as a pond plant. Zone 9. Sun to partial shade.

Black Mondo Grass
(*Ophiopogon planiscapus 'Nigrescens'*). This strappy evergreen's grasslike foliage is as black as nature gets. It spreads slowly but makes an excellent deer-resistant ground cover. It features pale pink flowers in midsummer and black, fleshy seeds in the fall. Zone 7. Sun to shade.

Green Cliff Brake Fern
(*Cheilanthes viridis*). Apple-green fronds on wire-thin black stems grow 12 to 18 inches tall in a stiff, upright habit that's deer resistant. This fern, unlike most, prefers sun. Zones 7 to 9. Sun.

Black Magic

Bugbane (*Actaea simplex* 'Hillside Black Beauty'). This stunning plant's purple leaves provide a striking backdrop for other shade lovers. In fall, its cream-colored flowers bloom on wandlike stems. Zone 3. Partial shade.

Rex Begonia (*Begonia rex* 'Black Fancy'). This dramatic plant offers handsome scalloped foliage for the shaded areas of a garden; it can also be used as a houseplant. Its small pink flowers arrive in winter, and it thrives in humid conditions with well-drained soil. Be sure not to overwater or overfertilize. Zone 10. Partial shade.



Love this table? The extraordinary San Martin table featured in these photographs was designed and made by Joseph Walsh (josephwalshstudio.com); it can be purchased through Todd Merrill Studio Contemporary for \$70,000.

Black Magic

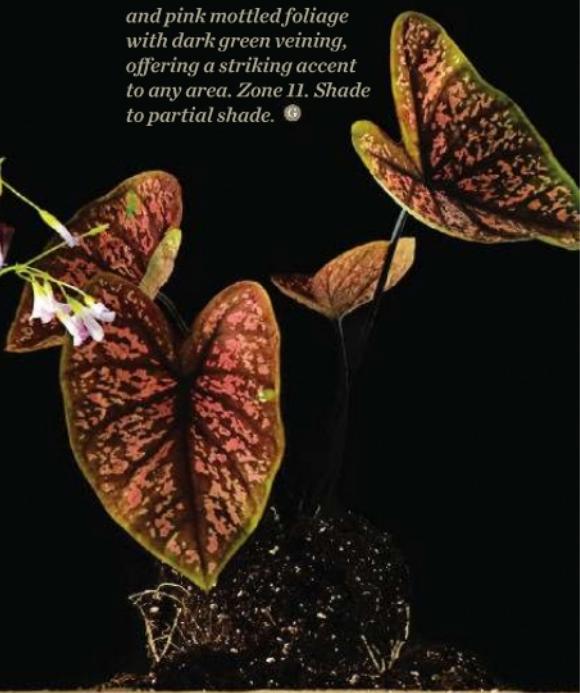
Ornamental Pepper
(*Capsicum 'Black Pepper'*). This plant's purple leaves and fruit make a lively addition to an annual border. The peppers have a spicy kick, so be careful if using them for cooking. Like all peppers, this one prefers full sun and is tolerant of drought and heat. Zone 10. Sun.



Purple Shamrock (*Oxalis regnellii 'Pink Princess'*). This sweet oxalis grows eight to ten inches tall; it features richly colored leaves and light pink star-shaped flowers. It's suited to planting indoors or outside. Zones 7 to 9. Partial sun to light shade.



Angel Wings (*Caladium 'Black Stem'*). An excellent shade plant for containers or in the garden, the caladium has black stems and pink mottled foliage with dark green veining, offering a striking accent to any area. Zone 11. Shade to partial shade. ☀



Way Out West

Residents of Marfa, Texas, have created vibrant gardens that bring life to the desert plains

BY JAMES RODEWALD PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANDON NORDEMAN

The entrance to El Cosmico, a hotel that offers lodging in vintage trailers, yurts, tepees, and tents.





When my wife visited, her first e-mail had the words “We’re moving to Marfa” between





every line. She was smitten



After ten years of weekend gardening in New York State's Mid-Hudson Valley, where my wife and I lovingly tended our peonies, our bleeding hearts, several rows of garlic, and a few other plants that were unappealing to the local fauna, the economy imploded and we both found ourselves unemployed. What had seemed such a necessity—a place where we could get our hands in the dirt and breathe deeply—was suddenly an extravagance.

I'd been the drinks editor at *Gourmet* magazine, which folded in October 2009, and my wife, Marella, was an independent curator and arts administrator. Six years earlier, she'd taken a trip to Marfa, a town on the high plains of West Texas that had been revitalized by the remarkable artist Donald Judd, who first moved there in 1972. Through the museum he established, Judd, who died in 1994 at 65, planted the seeds that helped turn Marfa into one of the country's great art destinations. It was on our radar, but when Marella visited, her first e-mail had "We're moving to Marfa" between every line. Not right away, but someday. She was smitten. When she got back to New York, we spent some invigorating hours discussing what we might do there—someday.

That someday came last December, a few months after we'd lost our jobs, when Marella was offered the position of director of administration at the museum, now called Chinati. Everything about this new chapter in our

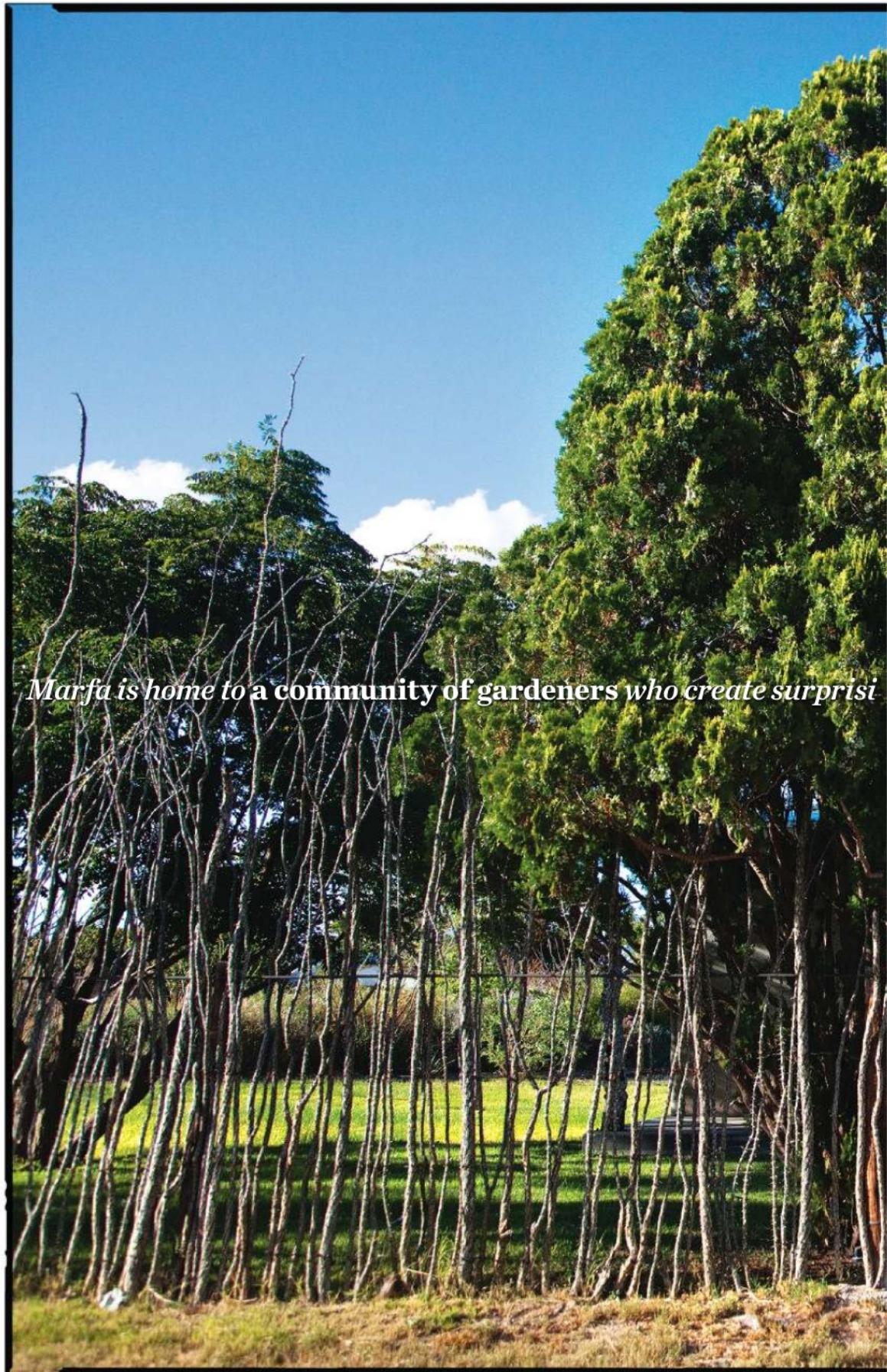
Clockwise from top left: Valerie Arber's tools and the fruits of her labor; Robert Arber, a printmaker who worked with Donald Judd; the Hudsons' yard; Campbell Bosworth (left) and Buck Johnston.

lives felt right. Sure, it would be an adjustment after New York, but Marfa was full of fascinating people, and the high-desert landscape was spectacular.

It was also forbidding, at least to hobbyist gardeners like us, accustomed to the comparatively forgiving soil and climate of the Northeast. Even more distressing were the lettuce options that I found on my first trip to the local grocery store: iceberg and frozen. But my iceberg melancholy melted away when I discovered that Marfa is home to a community of gardeners who not only coax delicious fruits, vegetables, and other plants from the arid landscape but also create surprising outdoor spaces that add color and texture to the West Texas expanses while still feeling of a piece with their surroundings.

Among the first gardeners Marella and I met were Bob Schwab, a transportation planner, and his wife, Leslie Wilkes, a painter who works with vibrant colors and hypnotic geometric patterns. Their arugula got Marella and me through the long weeks when our own lettuces were working their way up through the dirt, cotton burr, and compost. Back in 2005, Bob and Leslie went to a nursery in Alpine, a half hour away, and bought two varieties of peach tree—Rio Grande and Red Baron—and a cherry tree. “It was very windy,” Bob recalls. “We had to dig three holes in that very hard ground. We knew we’d lose a year if we didn’t plant them that weekend. It punctuated our presence here. It made this abstract thing we’d done real: we plant these trees, we’ll have to take care of them.” Last summer, a few months after our move, the trees bore fruit—mouthwatering fruit. “The (continued on page 64)

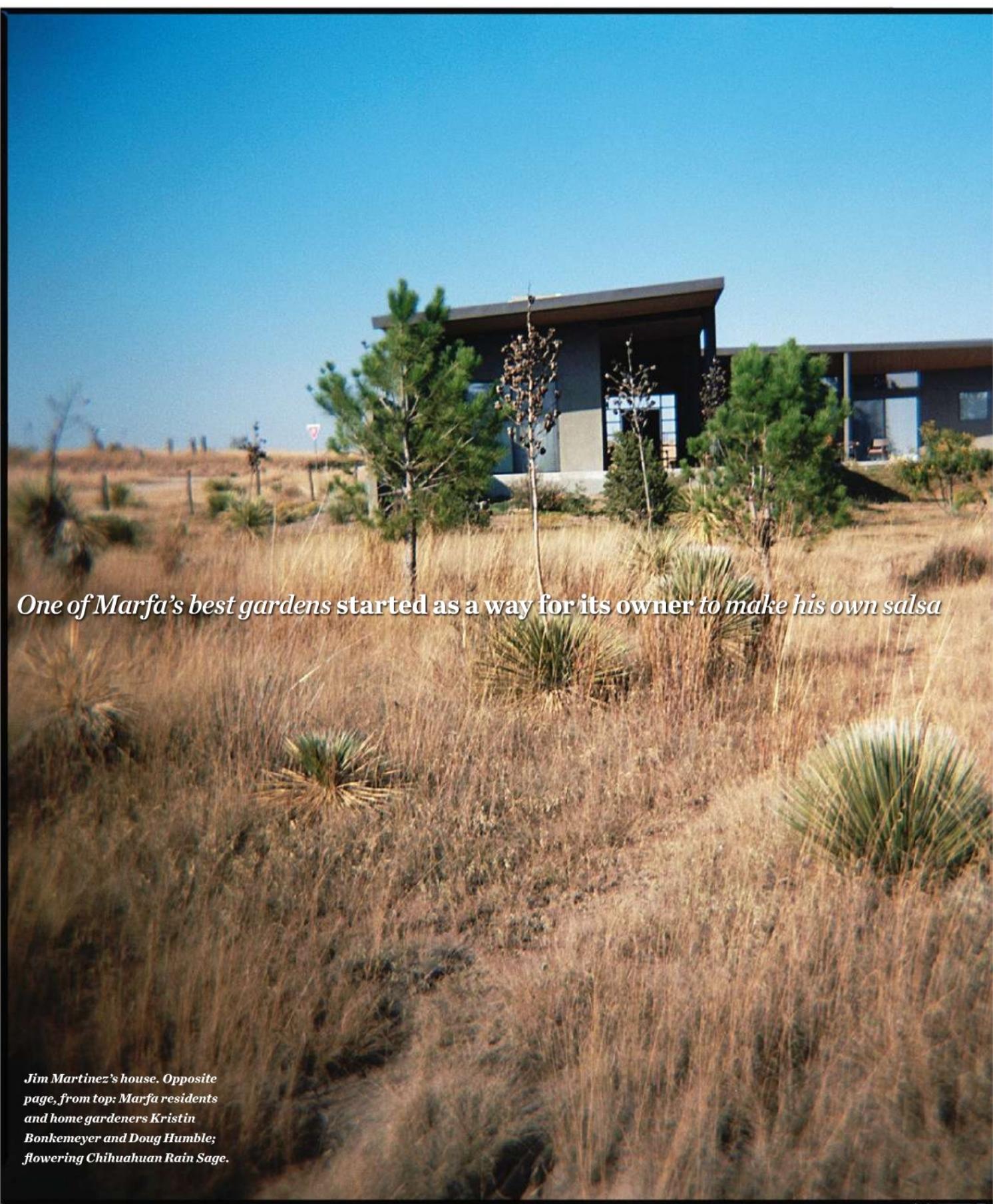
The Hudsons’ ocotillos. “It’s a living fence,” says Harry, who got them from a friend’s ranch.



Marfa is home to a community of gardeners who create surprising outdoor spaces that add color and texture to the West Texas expanses while still feeling of a piece with their surroundings.



Creating outdoor spaces that add color to the West Texas expanses



One of Marfa's best gardens started as a way for its owner to make his own salsa

Jim Martinez's house. Opposite page, from top: Marfa residents and home gardeners Kristin Bonkemeyer and Doug Humble; flowering Chihuahuan Rain Sage.



(continued from page 60) Rio Grande bloomed first," Leslie says. "It had pea-size fruit when we had a freeze in April. The Red Baron was just starting to bloom. The freeze burned its petals, but we ended up getting something like 230 pounds of peaches off that tree." I made a lot of peachy drinks this summer.

Although they can sell whatever they don't eat, Bob and Leslie's garden is a labor of love. One of Judd's goals was to establish a business that, in his words, would "sell produce, sell bottled water, the local tequila called *sotol*, and whatever else can be made here." But with the population shrinking, from a high of 5,000 during World War II to under 2,000 today, there isn't much of a local market. Even the restaurants—and there are three where on any given night you might find a \$30 entrée—can't sustain the town's few growers. What's more, in a place that gets about 12 inches of rain a year and has had a series of serious droughts, every growing season is a tightrope act.

Valerie and Robert Arber, who moved to Marfa in 1998, sell some of what they grow to local restaurants. They have one of the best gardens in Marfa, started when Robert planted tomatoes, chiles, and garlic to make his own salsa. Since then, they've turned a chunk of a city block into an oasis. A stand of Zinnia Orange King, Snow Puff cosmos, and gray-green flowering kale keeps company with a small jungle of tomato plants supported on metal-wire cages. Beyond the unruly foliage lies a series of raised beds cocooned in row-cover fabric to keep the insects off the lettuces and the German Giant radishes. And

JAMES RODEWALD, a freelance editor and writer, has worked at Gourmet and Sports Illustrated.

Marfa



'LAVANCE PURPLE' LAVENDER

(*Lavandula angustifolia*) is a dwarf lavender that can grow 18 inches high, making it a good choice for edging. It has deep purple flowers and greenish gray, very aromatic foliage.



PINK MUHLY GRASS

(*Muhlenbergia capillaris*) is a drought-tolerant grass that produces a spectacular bloom of billowy pinkish flowers in the fall. It works well planted en masse in a border on its own or mixed with other drought- and sun-loving perennials.

Local Hero



Landscape designer Jim Martinez has been creating water-wise, environmentally friendly gardens in Dallas and Marfa for more than 30 years. Surrounded by mountains, at an elevation of almost 5,000 feet, the Marfa plateau is subject to extreme temperature variations. "In winter, it can be 60 degrees in the day and drop to 15 at night," Martinez says. "Selecting plants that are adapted to these conditions is the key to success." As much as possible, he uses plants that are native or endemic to the region. A particular favorite is Hinckley's columbine (*Aquilegia chrysanthemum var. hinckleyana*), a shade-tolerant plant with masses of yellow blooms that grew only in this area until recently, when the nursery trade discovered it. Fragrant plants grow in abundance on the Marfa plateau, and when he can, Martinez selects plants based on their hummingbird-, butterfly-, and bee-attracting abilities. For design, he takes his cues from the surrounding high-desert grassland, where grasses grow in a well-spaced pattern—nature's way of ensuring that the plants benefit from the little rain that falls during the "rainy" season, from July through September. —Lindsey Taylor

Chihuahuan Desert

Extending over 175,000 square miles, from central Mexico into parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas—including the area around Marfa—the Chihuahuan Desert is the largest in North America. It's what's known as a rain shadow desert: its position between two massive mountain ranges blocks most of the moisture that would otherwise reach it from the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. Many smaller ranges and river valleys run through the Chihuahuan, making for great diversity of habitats and of plant and animal life. —L.T.





'ELLISIANA' SPINELESS PRICKLY PEAR
(*Opuntia caca-napa*) is a fast-growing compact that reaches a width of six feet and a height of six feet. In July, bright yellow flowers appear, followed by large, red fruit.

Marfa



'PURPLE PASTEL' AUTUMN SAGE
(*Salvia greggii*) is a dwarf semi-woody perennial native to Texas and Mexico. This tough plant, reaching three to four feet in height, has long-lasting purple flowers that add color to mixed borders.



COPPER CANYON DAISY
(*Tagetes lemmonii*) is an airy plant with pale green to deep green foliage and a distinctive scent. It can reach a height of three to six feet at maturity and has deep yellow flowers that appear from September to November.



PARRY'S AGAVE
(*Agave parryi var. truncata*) is a compact, rosette-forming succulent with squared-off blue-gray leaves; its yellow flowers appear in summer. It can grow two to three feet tall by three to four feet wide. Great in a succulent garden or a container.

MICHAEL KRAUS (7)

climbing a fence that separates the garden from an alley is one of the strangest things I've ever seen: a green gourd, almost two feet long, whose veiny countenance would not be out of place in a science-fiction thriller: *Revenge of the Caveman's Club Gourd!*

As quickly became clear to me, many of my new neighbors aren't strict about using native plants or xeriscaping (creating low-water-consumption landscapes). Water is expensive, but it's available, delivered through the local public utility. In fact, Harry Hudson, who, with his wife, Shelley, bought the old Marfa bus station in 2002, decided not to follow the advice of the plant consultant he'd hired.

"She was really smart," he says. "She picked all native plants. But I told her I wanted to see things grow in my lifetime." Instead, the Hudsons planted fast-growing cypress and ash trees, for privacy, as well as a gorgeous cactus garden inside the walls of their quirky compound. Yet when the couple bought a second building—a small adobe structure formerly known as the Tire House—to turn it into an office and guest room, Harry chose a traditional low-water, low-investment technique for fencing: rows of spiny ocotillo branches. "Ocotillo is incredibly strong," Harry says. "And it's a living fence." After he replaced the building's metal roof, which had been held down with the name-

sake tires, he used some of those old tires to create retaining walls to define garden plots.

THE FIRST PEOPLE to invite Marella and me over for dinner in Marfa were Buck Johnston, the 44-year-old co-owner of a new-media company, and her partner, Campbell Bosworth, 46, a painter-sculptor-woodworker with a wry sense of humor. They live and work in what used to be Marfa's oldest church and parsonage and have been here almost ten years, making them old-time newcomers. The meal they made—grilled lamb, local okra, roasted vegetables—was a great big welcome-to-Marfa hug. Their backyard is an exuberant

fantasyland, with an old trailer that serves as a guest room, home-grown gourds hanging from an ash tree like so many giant pears (or lounging Shmoos), and singing lovebirds in cages. In the middle of it all are several faxon yuccas, native plants that usually bloom annually (they're mirrored by a sculpture made from blue glass bottles arranged upside down in a spiky crown). "It's our favorite plant," Buck says. "We have nine or ten of them, and they've grown beautifully. The strange thing is, not one of ours has ever bloomed. In nine years!"

Though their yard is among the more ornate ones I've seen, there's a permanence to the plantings and the outdoor art that makes the space feel right; "I am here," each element seems to say, "and this is where I belong." Something about walking through Buck and Camp's yard brought me back to Judd's outdoor installation at Chinati: 15 groupings of concrete works extending in a straight line across the property's eastern edge. Behind them is a row of cottonwoods, planted by Judd as a backdrop for the art. Each concrete work is placed precisely—whether the individual shapes appeal or not quickly becomes beside the point. You take in the trees, the native grasses, the mountains beyond, perhaps even the antelope wandering in front of them—that's the piece. The more I looked at it, the more Judd's artistic impulse seemed akin to the motivation of the gardener. His most radical artistic innovation was to leave off the pedestal, or base, and place his work directly on the floor or ground; that sounds a lot like the difference between a potted houseplant and a well-made garden. ☺

A Traveler's Guide to Marfa

WHERE TO STAY

El Cosmico 802 South Highland Avenue (877/822-1950; elcosmico.com). \$90–\$125 trailer; \$60 yurt; \$75 tepee. You read it right: your lodging options are a refurbished trailer, a tepee, or a yurt, all clean and comfortable.

Thunderbird 601 West San Antonio Street (877/729-1984; thunderbirdmarfa.com). \$120–\$200. A '50s motel transformed into a model of modernity.

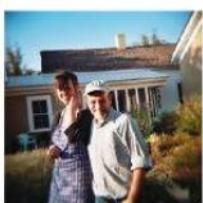
WHERE TO EAT

Austin Street Café 405 North Austin Street (432/729-4653; austinstreetcafe.com). Housed in the restored Walker House (the first house Donald Judd bought in Marfa), Lisa and Jack Copeland's café serves delicious home-cooked meals and snacks on the first Sunday of each month—the only day it's open.



place in town to get a cocktail.

Pizza Foundation 100 East San Antonio Street (432/729-3377; pizzafoundation.com). Stunningly good thin-crust pies and excellent salads.



WHERE TO GO

Ballroom Marfa 108 East San Antonio Street (432/729-3600; ballroommarfa.org). On any given day at this art deco-era ballroom, you might see a photography exhibit, the work of young Mexican artists, or Lyle Lovett.

The Chinati Foundation 1 Cavalry Row (432/729-4362; chinati.org). Tours (by appointment) of Donald Judd's installations, including his 100 works in mill aluminum and his 15 untitled works in concrete, as well as work by other artists.

Judd Foundation 104 South Highland Avenue (432/729-4406, ext. 103; juddfoundation.org). Tour Judd's Marfa residence, known as The Block, including his incredible library. Separate studio tours are also available.

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center State Highway 118, Fort Davis (432/364-2499; cdri.org). This 500-plus-acre preserve in the foothills of the Davis Mountains has a desert botanical garden, a cactus and succulent greenhouse, and several miles of hiking trails.

Cochineal 107 West San Antonio Street (432/729-3300). Tom Rapp and Toshi Sakihara left their New York City restaurant, Etats-Unis, for the desert, but their fans wore them down: they're now doing some of the region's best cooking.

Food Shark Under the pavilion, Highland Avenue at the train tracks (432/386-6540; foodsharkmarfa.com). Great sandwiches and salads from Marfa's only food truck.

Maiya's 103 North Highland Avenue (432/729-4410; maiyasrestaurant.com). Dependably delicious food and large portions are standard at Maiya's, and it's the best



*The Arbers have turned **a chunk of a city block** into an oasis*



NOTEBOOK

Ode on a Victorian Urn

Four inspired planting ideas show the versatility of this classical garden fixture

BY LINDSEY TAYLOR



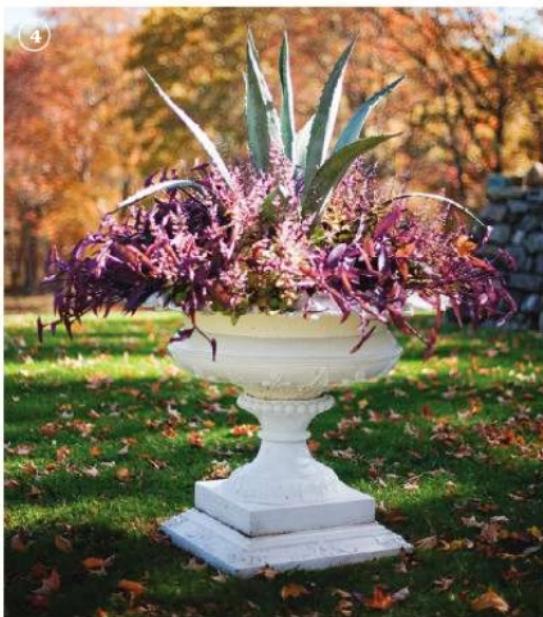
①



②



③



④

1 The Victorians favored planting urns with a single exotic centerpiece, along with complementary underplantings that had the same cultural needs (see "The New Victorians," page 36). For this rusted urn, Ken Selody, the owner of Atlock Farm in Somerset, N.J., chose the tender perennial *Leontis leonurus*, or lion's tail. The deer-resistant South African shrub typically reaches three feet by three feet. Grow in full sun.

2 For this cast-iron urn, Selody featured the dramatic Blue Ginger (*Dichorisandra thyrsiflora*) and the long blooms of Red-Hot Cat-tail (*Acalypha hispida*), underplanted with Variegated Elephant Ear and Chartreuse Joseph's Coat. Grow in full sun.

3 Texture can be just as effective as hue in creating enticing contrasts. In this urn, Selody spotlights a foxtail fern, its intricate feathery foliage reaching out in every direction, underplanted with velvety, broad-leaved Begonia 'Art Hodes.' Grow in partial shade.

4 Rob Girard, a gardener at Peter Wooster's garden in Roxbury, Conn., chose a spiky *Agave longissima* for this enormous white urn, an ideal central feature for a Victorian-style garden. The blue agave is underplanted with *Tradescantia pallida* and *Plectranthus oertendahlii*. Grow in full sun. (To purchase urns, see Sourcebook, page 74.)



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Notebook



Haunting Beauty

FEW PLANTS QUICKENED the pulse of Victorian-era collectors more than the seemingly humble fern (see "Ancient Beauty," page 22). It's safe to say that the specimen above, the *Athyrium 'Ghost'* fern, with its luminous, silvery fronds, would have caused a stir had it been discovered back then.

In the early 1990s, it certainly impressed botanist John Mickel, then curator of ferns at the New York Botanical Garden. Mickel was shown this fern by a private gardener in Richmond, Virginia. Struck by its otherworldly appearance, he went home with some cuttings and determined that the plant was a hybrid of the American Lady fern and the Japanese Painted fern.

"It is sort of a happy accident in that it came up spontaneously, as opposed to being a controlled hybridization," says Robbin Moran, Mickel's successor at NYBG. Because of its hybrid origins, the Ghost fern is sterile and can be reproduced only through tissue culture, which typically occurs in a lab.

Today, Ghost ferns sold commercially are primarily created at Casa Flora, a horticulture firm based in Dallas. "Tissue culture has allowed ferns that would be much more rare to become much more common," says Jeff Cook, who works in sales at Casa Flora. The *Athyrium 'Ghost'* (\$15) and other ferns can be purchased from Plant Delights Nursery (see Sourcebook, page 74). —Stephen Treffinger

Grow Zones: 'Ghost' Fern

The *Athyrium 'Ghost'* is a hardy, shade-loving fern that thrives in Zones 3 to 9. It has a rigid, upright structure and can reach two to three feet in height. Its fronds open silvery white and darken over time to gray-green with burgundy midribs. The Ghost fern is a great accent to darker-leaved shade lovers like *Heuchera 'Obsidian'*; try planting multiple ferns en masse to create an ethereal glow in a woodland garden. Like most hardy ferns, the Ghost requires little care, especially when planted in slightly acidic, humus-rich soil. —L.T.

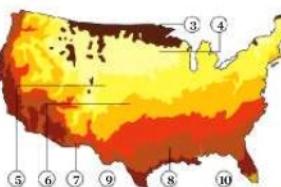


PHOTO LIBRARY FACING PAGE: TODD COLEMAN (4)

Can you recommend some good sources for buying seeds and offer some tips for starting plants from seed?

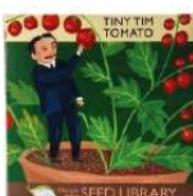
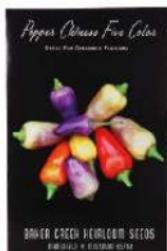
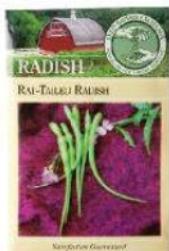
—Julia Tomer, Pittsburgh

Starting plants from seed, whether flowers, fruits, or vegetables, requires a little research. Some seeds will need an early start indoors; others can be sown directly in the garden.

Most seed packets will provide you with all the information you need to have a successful season, as will the websites of many online purveyors. While I still enjoy receiving the odd seed catalogue or two by mail—Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds (rareseeds.com) is a favorite—I do most of my seed shopping online.

Secret Seeds (secretseeds.com), a source in England, has a fascinating selection of rare and exotic seeds, including Goji berry and Foxglove 'Apricot Delight.' I also love Seeds from Italy (growitalian.com), a mail-order distributor that offers a wide range of vegetable seeds, including excellent Sicilian violet cauliflower. And I recently discovered the Vermont company High Mowing Organic Seeds (highmowingseeds.com), a great source for organic seeds. A word to the wise: most seeds are cheap—costing around \$2.50 a packet—so it's easy to overbuy. Consider how much space you have in your garden, and make a list before you shop. —L.T.

Have a gardening question? Send it to question@gardendesign.com.



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Sowing in Snow

Sowing seeds when there's still snow on the ground may sound like folly, but according to Tom Stearns, founder of High Mowing Organic Seeds in Wolcott, Vermont, you can do just that with certain plants. Poppies, in fact, benefit from the practice. Stearns, whose company is one of the major sellers of organic seeds in the country, points out that the poppy—native to many parts of the world—actually needs cold and moisture in order to germinate. In a process known as stratification, the poppy's hard outer seed coat softens when exposed to extended periods of below-freezing temperatures. Then, when the weather gets warmer and the seed receives moisture from the melting snow, the germinating plant can penetrate the softened outer shell. Late winter is the time to sow poppies: just scatter the seeds right onto the snow in the area of your garden where you want the poppies to grow. In a typical season, you'll have a crop of beautiful flowers by June. No snow? Try storing the seeds in the refrigerator for one to three months in a lightly moistened paper towel sealed in a plastic bag, then plant them in the garden after the last frost. —L.T.

Victorian Garden Travel Guide

Tap your inner Victorian and experience the era at these global destinations

Belfast Botanic Gardens Belfast, Ireland; belfastcity.gov.uk. The Palm House, a dramatically curvilinear greenhouse with a distinctive dome, predates the Palm House at London's Kew. The Tropical Ravine, with such plants as cycads, palms, mosses, and orchids, was first planted in 1889 and contains some of the oldest seed plants around today.

Blithewold Mansion, Gardens & Arboretum *Bristol, Rhode Island; blithewold.org.* If you enjoy Victorian themes but appreciate a less formal garden, this John DeWolf–designed landscape is for you. It incorporates a rock garden, rose garden, and Great Lawn, along with one of the largest Giant Sequoias east of the Rockies.

Conservatory of Flowers
Golden Gate Park, San Francisco; conservatoryofflowers.org. An array of Victorian-era displays—including an original aquatic pond room housing a *Victoria amazonica* water lily and an arbor complete with furniture and potted plants—will keep you amused at the oldest wood-and-glass greenhouse in North America.

Kylemore Abbey & Victorian Walled Garden Galway, Ireland; kylemoreabbeytourism.ie. Built by Mitchell and Margaret Henry between 1867 and 1871, the six-acre Victorian Walled Garden was one of the last such gardens created in Ireland during the Victorian era. Over the years, it fell into disrepair, until Irish Benedictine nuns restored it and reopened it in 2000. Only plants that grew in Victorian times are found in the garden today.

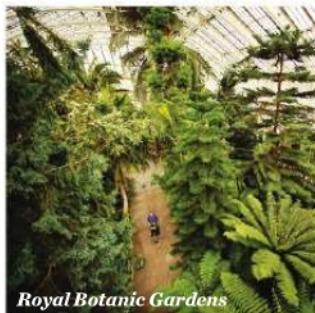
Missouri Botanical Garden
St. Louis: mobot.org, Philanthro-

pist Henry Shaw founded the Missouri Botanical Garden (now the oldest botanical garden in continuous operation in the U.S.) in 1859 as his country house and a place to study and display collections of rare plants. Among its 79 acres is a Victorian "district" with a parterre and pincushion garden. It also has a rose garden arbor in the shape of a pinwheel and a traditional boxwood garden.

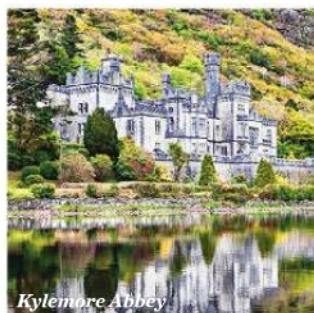
New York Botanical Garden
Bronx, New York; nybg.org. Any



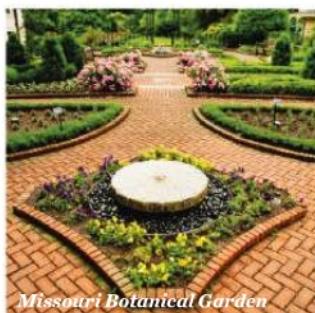
Belfast Botanic Gardens



Royal Botanic Gardens



Kylemore Abbey



Missouri Botanical Garden

true plant lover will want to experience the comprehensive collection housed here. Founded in 1891 for research, education, and public enjoyment, the garden has a Victorian-style glasshouse, which dates to 1902. Both inside and out, you can find elements of Victorian garden design throughout the collections.

Point Ellice House and Gardens
2616 Victoria, British Columbia,
Canada; pointellicehouse.ca. In

addition to the breathtaking gardens that date to 1889, the Sequoia planted in 1877, and the heritage roses and hollyhocks, there's a fascinating collection of archival photographs, 19th-century seed catalogues, and Victorian garden-ing tools.

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew London, England; [kew.org](http://www.kew.org). A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Kew comprises 300 acres and 39 iconic buildings, and it houses the world's most

diverse botanical collections. Amid the myriad examples of Victoriana is a permanent collection of paintings by the 19th-century plant collector and prolific artist Marianne North.

Tatton Park Knutsford, Cheshire, England; tattonpark.org.uk. Fern aficionados will marvel at the New Zealand and Australian ferns, among others, housed in the park's fernery, which dates to the 1850s.

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Notebook

Sourcebook

Fresh

For more online plant sources, visit Companion Plants (companionplants.com), Brushwood Nursery (gardenvines.com), or Almost Eden (almostedenplants.com). To purchase an **American pitcher plant** and a host of other carnivorous plants, go to Pet Flytrap (petflytrap.com). For a private tour of the **Gardens of Raku Place** (\$5 per person, in support of the Erie Art Museum), go to kemenyfyy.com. Purchase a **Felco pruning saw** from Felco Store (\$28.78; felcostore.com). When in New York City, visit the Ted Muehling Store (27 Howard Street; 212/431-3825) to view **The Island of Rota** (Library Council of MoMA, 2010) or purchase the book (\$3,000; proceeds benefit the Museum of Modern Art Library) from the MoMA Library (212/708-9430). To order the **Cyclone Lounger** and the **Drop End Table**, contact Uhuru Design (718/855-6519; uhurudesign.com).

Way Out West
For all the dirt on **arid plants**, buy Judy Mielke's *Native Plants for Southwestern Landscapes*, from the University of Texas Press (\$16.72; utexas.edu/utpress). To purchase heat- and drought-tolerant plants, go to High Country Gardens (highcountrygardens.com) or Yuccado (yuccado.com).

Critic

Paula Deitz, editor of *The Hudson Review*, is also the editor of a new series of essays on gardening titled *Of Gardens*, available for purchase from the University of Pennsylvania Press (\$29.95; www.upenn.edu/pennpress/).

Grow

To purchase **ferns**, go to Plant Delights (plantdelights.com).

Style

When in Brooklyn, New York, head to **Darr** (369 Atlantic Avenue; 718/797-9733; shopdarr.com) to purchase items similar to those on the Naturalist's Desk.

Black Magic

To learn more about the shadowy world of **black plants**, purchase *Black Plants* by Paul Bonine (\$14.95; timberpress.com). To find black plants, go to Proven Winners (provenwinners.com) and Landcraft Environment (landcraftenvironment.com). Contact Todd Merrill Antiques (65 Bleeker Street, New York City; 212/673-0531) or go to merrillantiques.com to view or purchase the San Martin table by Joseph Walsh (\$70,000; josephwalshstudio.com).

Notebook

To purchase cast-iron Victorian **urns**, go to A Rustic Garden (arusticgarden.com). For an online plant source, including one from which to purchase a **Ghost fern** (\$4.95), go to Dave's Garden (davesgarden.com).

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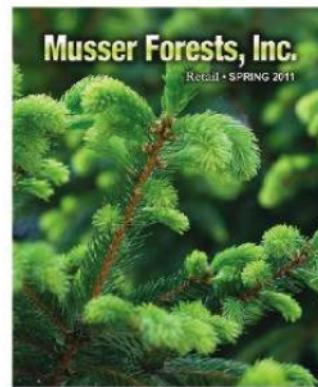
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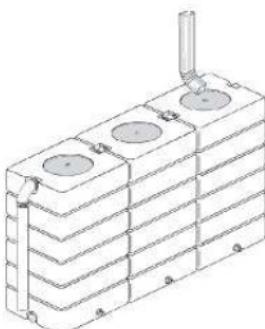
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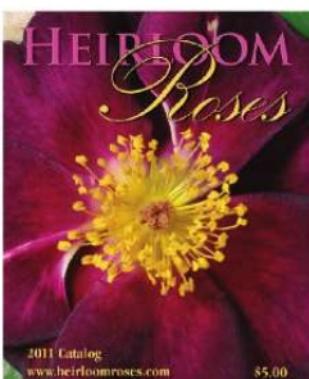


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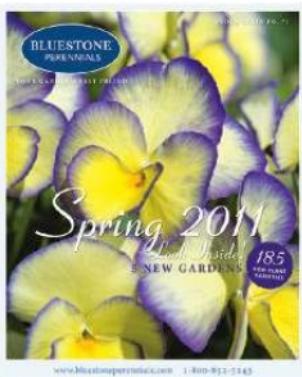


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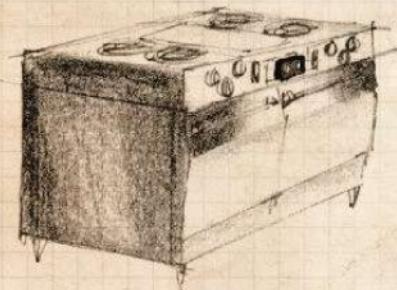
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